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TREATISE

Concerning

Religious Affections,

In Three PARTS;

PART I. Concerning the Nature of the *Affections*, and their Importance in *Religion*.

PART II. Shewing what are *no certain Signs* that *religious Affections* are *gracious*, or that they are *not*.

PART III. Shewing what *are diſtinguiſhing Signs* of truly gracious and *holy Affections*.

By *Jonathan Edwards*, A. M.

And Paſtor of the *firſt* Church in *Northampton*.

Levit. ix. ult. and x. 1, 2. *And there came a Fire out from before the Lord,-----upon the Altar;-----which when all the People ſaw, they ſhouted and fell on their Faces. And* Nadab *and* Abihu*-----offered ſtrange Fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not: And there went out a Fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord.*

Cant. ii. 12, 13. *The Flowers appear on the Earth, the Time of the Singing of Birds is come, and the Voice of the Turtle is heard in our Land; the Fig-tree putteth forth her green Figs, and the Vines with the tender Grape, give a good Smell.* Ver. 15. *Take us the Foxes, the little Foxes, which ſpoil the Vines; for our Vines have tender Grapes.*

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THE

PREFACE.

THERE is no Queſtion whatſoever, that is of greater Importance to Mankind, and that it more concerns every individual Perſon to be well reſolved in, than this, *What are the diſtinguiſhing Qualifications of thoſe that are in Favour with God, and entitled to his eternal Rewards?* Or, which comes to the ſame Thing, *What is the Nature of true Religion? and wherein do lie the diſtinguiſhing Notes of that Virtue and Holineſs, that is acceptable in the Sight of God.* But tho' it be of ſuch Importance, and tho' we have clear and abundant Light in the Word of God, to direct us in this Matter, yet there is no one Point, wherein profeſſing Chriſtians do more differ one from another. It would be endleſs to reckon up the Variety of Opinions in this Point, that divide the Chriſtian World; making manifeſt the Truth of that of our Saviour, *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leads to Life, and few there be that find it.*

The Conſideration of theſe Things has long engaged me to attend to this Matter, with the utmoſt Diligence and Care, and Exactneſs of Search and Enquiry, that I have been capable of: It is a Subject on which my Mind has been peculiarly intent, ever ſince I firſt entred on the Study of Divinity.—But as to the Succeſs of my Enquiries, it muſt be left to the Judgment of the Reader of the following Treatiſe.

I am ſenſible it is much more difficult to judge impartially of that which is the Subject of this Diſcourſe, in the midſt of the Duſt and Smoke of ſuch a State of Controverſy, as this Land is now in, about Things of this Nature: As it is more difficult to write impartially, ſo it is more difficult to read impartially.—Many will probably be hurt in their Spirits, to find ſo much that appertains to religious Affections,

here

here condemned: And perhaps Indignation and Contempt will be excited in others, by finding so much here justified and approved. And it may be, some will be ready to charge me with Inconsistence with myself, in so much approving some Things, and so much condemning others; as I have found, this has always been objected to me by some, ever since the Beginning of our late Controversies about Religion. 'Tis a hard Thing to be a hearty zealous Friend of what has been *good* and glorious, in the late extraordinary Appearances, and to rejoice much in it; and at the same Time, to see the evil and pernicious Tendency of what has been *bad*, and earnestly to oppose that. But yet, I am *humbly*, but *fully* perswaded, we shall never be in the Way of Truth, nor go on in a Way acceptable to God, and tending to the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom, 'till we do so. There is indeed something very mysterious in it, that so much Good and so much Bad, should be mix'd together in the *Church of God:* As 'tis a mysterious Thing, and what has puzzled and amazed many a good Christian, that there should be that which is so divine and precious, as the saving Grace of God, and the new and divine Nature, dwelling in the same Heart, with so much Corruption, Hypocrisy and Iniquity, in *a particular Saint*. Yet neither of these, is more mysterious than real. And neither of 'em is a new or rare Thing. 'Tis no new Thing, that much false Religion should prevail, at a Time of great reviving of true Religion; and that at such a Time, Multitudes of Hypocrites should spring up among true Saints. It was so in that great Reformation, and Revival of Religion, that was in *Josiah*'s Time; as appears by *Jer.* iii. 10. and iv. 3, 4. and also by the great Apostacy that there was in the Land, so soon after his Reign. So it was in that great Out-pouring of the Spirit upon the *Jews*, that was in the Days of *John the Baptist*; as appears by the great Apostacy of that People, so soon after so general an Awakening, and the temporary religious Comforts and Joys of many; John v. 35, *Ye were willing, for a Season, to rejoice in his Light*. So it was in those great Commotions that were among the Multitude, occasion'd by the Preaching of Jesus Christ: *Of the many that were then called, but few were chosen*; of the Multitude that were roused and affected by his Preaching, and at one Time or other appeared mightily engaged, full of Admiration of Christ, and elevated with Joy, but few were true Disciples, that stood the Shock of the great Trials that came afterwards, and endured to the End: Many were like the stony Ground, or thorny Ground; and but few, comparatively, like the good Ground: Of the whole Heap that was gathered, great Part was Chaff, that the Wind afterwards drove away; and the Heap of Wheat that was left, was comparatively small; as appears abundantly, by the History of the New Testament. So it was in that great Out-pouring of the Spirit that was in the Apostle's Days; as appears by *Matth.* 24, 10, 11, 12, 13. *Gal.* 3, 1. and 4, 11, 15. *Phil.* 2, 21, and 3, 18, 19. And the two Epistles of the *Corinthians*, and many other Parts of the new Testament. And so it was in the great *Reformation* from Popery.

Popery.——It appears plainly to have been in the visible Church of God, in Times of great reviving of Religion, from Time to Time, as it is with the Fruit Trees in the Spring; there are a Multitude of Blossoms; all which appear fair and beautiful, and there is a promising Appearance of young Fruits; but many of them are but of short Continuance, they soon fall off, and never come to Maturity.

Not that it is to be supposed, that it will always be so: For tho' there never will, in this World, be an entire Purity; either in particular Saints, in a perfect Freedom from Mixtures of Corruption; or in the Church of God, without any Mixture of Hypocrites with Saints, and counterfeit Religion, and false Appearances of Grace, with true Religion and real Holiness: Yet, 'tis evident, that there will come a Time of much greater Purity in the Church of God, than has been in Ages past; it is plain by those Texts of Scriptures, *Isai.* lii. 1. *Ezek.* 44. 6, 7, 9. *Joel* 3, 17. *Zech.* 14, 21. *Psal.* 69, 32, 35, 36. *Isai.* 35, 8, 10. *Chap.* 4, 3, 4. *Ezek.* 20, 38. *Psal.* 37, 9, 10, 11, 29. And one great Reason of it will be, that at that Time, God will give much greater Light to his People, to distinguish between true Religion and its Counterfeits; Mal. iii. 3. *And he shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver; and he shall purify the Sons of* Levi, *and purge them as Gold and Silver; that they may offer to the Lord an Offering in Righteousness.* With Verse 18, which is a Continuation of the Prophecy of the same happy Times; *then shall ye return, and discern between the Righteous and the Wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.*

'Tis by the Mixture of counterfeit Religion with true, not discern'd and distinguished, that the Devil has had his greatest Advantage against the Cause and Kingdom of Christ, all along, hitherto. 'Tis plainly by this Means, principally, that he has prevail'd against all Revivings of Religion, that ever have been, since the first founding of the Christian Church. By this, he hurt the Cause of Christianity, in, and after the apostolic Age, much more than by all the Persecutions of both *Jews* and Heathens: The Apostles in all their Epistles, shew themselves much more concerned at the former Mischief, than the latter. By this, *Satan* prevail'd against the Reformation, begun by *Luther*, *Zuinglius*, &c. to put a Stop to its Progress, and bring it into Disgrace; ten Times more than by all those bloody, cruel, and before unheard of Persecutions of the Church of *Rome*. By this principally, has he prevailed against Revivals of Religion, that have been in our Nation since the Reformation. By this he prevail'd against *New-England*, to quench the Love, and spoil the Joy of her Espousals, about an hundred Years ago. And I think, I have had Opportunity enough to see plainly, that by this, the Devil has prevail'd against the late great Revival of Religion in *New-England*s so happy and promising in its Beginning: Here most evidently has been the main Advantage *Satan* has had against us; by this he has foil'd

foil'd us; 'tis by this Means that the Daughter of *Zion* in this Land, now lies on the Ground, in ſuch piteous Circumſtances, as we now behold her; with her Garments rent, her Face disfigur'd, her Nakedneſs expos'd, her Limbs broken, and weltering in the Blood of her own Wounds, and in no wiſe able to ariſe; and this, ſo quickly after her late great Joys and Hope: Lam. i, 17. Zion *ſpreadeth forth her Hands, and there is none to comfort her: The Lord hath commanded concerning* Jacob, *that his Adverſaries ſhall be round about him*: Jeruſalem *is as a menſtruous Woman among them.* I have obſerv'd the Devil prevail the ſame Way, againſt two great Revivings of Religion in this Country.—*Satan* goes on with Mankind, as he began with them: He prevail'd againſt our firſt Parents, and caſt 'em out of *Paradiſe*, and ſuddenly brought all their Happineſs and Glory to an End, by appearing to be a Friend to their happy *Paradiſaic* State, and pretending to advance it to higher Degrees. So the ſame cunning Serpent, that beguiled *Eve* thro' his Subtilty, by perverting us from the Simplicity that is in Chriſt, hath ſuddenly prevail'd to deprive us of that fair Proſpect, we had a little while ago, of a Kind of paradiſaic State of the Church of God in *New-England.*

After Religion has revived in the Church of God, and Enemies appear, People that are engaged to defend its Cauſe, are commonly moſt expoſed, where they are leaſt ſenſible of Danger. While they are wholy intent upon the Oppoſition that appears openly before 'em, to make Head againſt that, and do neglect carefully to look all round 'em, the Devil comes behind 'em, and gives a fatal Stab unſeen; and has Opportunity to give a more home Stroke, and wound the deeper, becauſe he ſtrikes at his Leiſure, and according to his Pleaſure, being obſtructed by no Guard or Reſiſtance.

And ſo it is likely ever to be in the Church, whenever Religion revives remarkably, 'till we have learned well to diſtinguiſh between true and falſe Religion, between ſaving Affections and Experiences, and thoſe manifold fair Shews, and glittering Appearances, by which they are counterfeited; the Conſequences of which, when they are not diſtinguiſhed, are often inexpreſſibly dreadful. *By this Means*, the Devil gratifies himſelf, by bringing it to paſs, that That ſhould be offered to God, by Multitudes, under a Notion of a pleaſing acceptable Sacrifice to him, that is indeed above all Things abominable to him. *By this Means*, he deceives great Multitudes about the State of their Souls; making them think they are ſomething, when they are nothing; and ſo eternally undoes them: And not only ſo, but eſtabliſhes many in a ſtrong Confidence of their eminent Holineſs, who are in God's Sight ſome of the vileſt of Hypocrites. *By this Means* he many Ways damps and wounds Religion in the Hearts of the Saints, obſcures and deforms it by corrupt Mixtures, cauſes their religious Affections wofully to degenerate, and ſometimes for a conſiderable Time, to be like the *Manna*, that bred worms and ſtank; and dreadfully

dreadfully enſnares and confounds the Minds of others of the Saints, and brings 'em into great Difficulties and Temptations, and entangles 'em in a Wilderneſs, out of which they can by no Means extricate themſelves. *By this Means*, *Satan* mightily encourages the Hearts of open Enemies of Religion, and ſtrengthens their Hands, and fills them with Weapons, and makes ſtrong their Fortreſſes; when at the ſame Time, Religion and the Church of God lie expoſed to 'em, as a City without Walls. *By this Means*, he brings it to paſs, that Men work Wickedneſs under a Notion of doing God Service, and ſo ſin without Reſtraint, yea with earneſt Forwardneſs and Zeal, and with all their Might. *By this Means*, he brings in, even the Friends of Religion, inſenſibly to themſelves, to do the Work of Enemies, by deſtroying Religion in a far more effectual Manner, than open Enemies can do, under a Notion of advancing it. *By this Means*, the Devil ſcatters the Flock of Chriſt, and ſets 'em one againſt another, and that with great Heat of Spirit, under a Notion of Zeal for God; and Religion by Degrees degenerates into vain Jangling; and during the Strife, *Satan* leads both Parties far out of the right Way, driving each to great Extremes, one on the Right Hand, and the other on the Left, according as he finds they are moſt inclined, or moſt eaſily moved and ſway'd, 'till the right Path in the Middle, is almoſt wholly neglected. And in the midſt of this Confuſion, the Devil has great Opportunity to advance his own Intereſt, and make it ſtrong in Ways innumerable, and get the Government of all into his own Hands, and work his own Will. And by what is ſeen of the terrible Conſequences of this counterfeit Religion, when not diſtinguiſhed from true Religion, God's People in general have their Minds unhinged and unſettled in Things of Religion, and know not where to ſet their Foot, or what to think or do; and many are brought into Doubts, whether there be any Thing at all in Religion; and Hereſy, and Infidelity and Atheiſm greatly prevail.

Therefore, it greatly concerns us to uſe our utmoſt Endeavours, clearly to diſcern, and have it well ſettled and eſtabliſhed, wherein true Religion does conſiſt. 'Till this be done, it may be expected that great Revivings of Religion will be but of ſhort Continuance: 'Till this be done, there is but little Good to be expected, of all our warm Debates, in Converſation and from the Preſs, not knowing clearly and diſtinctly, what we ought to contend for.

My Deſign is to contribute my Mite, and to uſe my beſt (however feeble) Endeavours to this End, in the enſuing Treatiſe: Wherein it muſt be noted, that my Deſign is ſomewhat diverſe from the Deſign of what I have formerly publiſhed, which was to ſhew *the diſtinguiſhing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God*, including both his common, and ſaving Operations; but what I aim at now, is to ſhew the Nature and Signs of the *gracious Operations* of God's Spirit, by which they are to be diſtinguiſhed from all Things whatſoever, that the Minds of

Men

Men are the Subjects of, which are not of a saving Nature. If I have succeeded in this my Aim, in any tolerable Measure, I hope it will tend to promote the Interest of Religion. And whether I have succeeded to bring any Light to this Subject, or no, and however my Attempt may be reproach'd, in these captious, censorious Times, I hope in the Mercy of a gracious and righteous God, for the Acceptance of the Sincerity of my Endeavours, and hope also, for the Candor and Prayers of the true Followers of the meek and charitable Lamb of God.

PART

PART I.

Concerning the Nature of the Affections, and their Importance in Religion.

1 PETER i. 8.

Whom having not ſeen, ye love: In whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory.

IN theſe Words, the Apoſtle repreſents the State of the Minds of the Chriſtians he wrote to, under the Perſecutions they were then the Subjects of. Theſe Perſecutions are what he has Reſpect to, in the two preceeding Verſes, when he ſpeaks of *the Trial of their Faith*, and of *their being in Heavineſs through manifold Temptations.*

Such Trials are of threefold Benefit to true Religion: Hereby the Truth of it is manifeſted, and it appears to be indeed *true Religion:* They, above all other Things, have a Tendency to diſtinguiſh between true Religion and falſe, and to cauſe the Difference between them evidently to appear. Hence they are called by the

the Name of *Trials*, in the Verſe nextly preceeding the Text, and in innumerable other Places: They try the Faith and Religion of Profeſſors, of what Sort it is, as apparent Gold is tried in the Fire, and manifeſted, whether it be true Gold or no. And the Faith of true Chriſtians being thus tried and proved to be true, *is found to Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory*; as in that preceeding Verſe.

And then, Theſe Trials are of further Benefit to true Religion; they not only manifeſt the *Truth* of it, but they make it's genuine *Beauty* and *Amiableneſs* remarkably to appear. True Virtue never appears ſo lovely, as when it is moſt oppreſſed: And the divine Excellency of real Chriſtianity, is never exhibited with ſuch Advantage, as when under the greateſt Trials: Then it is that true Faith appears much more precious than Gold; and upon this Account, is *found to Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory*.

And again, Another Benefit that ſuch Trials are of to true Religion, is, that they purify and increaſe it. They not only manifeſt it to be true, but alſo tend to refine it, and deliver it from thoſe Mixtures of that which is falſe, which incumber and impede it; that nothing may be left but that which is true. They tend to cauſe the Amiableneſs of true Religion to appear to the beſt Advantage, as was before obſerved; and not only ſo, but they tend to increaſe it's Beauty, by eſtabliſhing and confirming it, and making it more lively and vigorous, and purifying it from thoſe Things that obſcured it's Luſtre and Glory. As Gold that is tried in the Fire, is purged from it's Alloy, and all Remainders of Droſs, and comes forth more ſolid and beautiful; ſo true Faith being tried as Gold is tried in the Fire, becomes more precious; and thus alſo is *found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory*. The Apoſtle ſeems to have Reſpect to each of theſe Benefits, that Perſecutions are of to true Religion, in the Verſe preceeding the Text.

And

And in the Text, the Apoſtle obſerves how true Religion operated in the Chriſtians he wrote to, under their Perſecutions, whereby theſe Benefits of Perſecution appeared in them; or what manner of Operation of true Religion, in them, it was, whereby their Religion, under Perſecution, was manifeſted to be *true* Religion, and eminently appeared in the genuine *Beauty* and *Amiableneſs* of true Religion, and alſo appeared to be *increaſed* and *purified*, and ſo was like to be *found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory, at the Appearing of Jeſus Chriſt*. And there were two Kinds of Operation, or Exerciſe of true Religion in them, under their Sufferings, that the Apoſtle takes Notice of in the Text, wherein theſe Benefits appeared.

1. *Love to Chriſt*; *Whom having not ſeen, ye love.* The World was ready to wonder, what ſtrange Principle it was, that influenc'd them to expoſe themſelves to ſo great Sufferings, to forſake the Things that were ſeen, and renounce all that was dear and pleaſant, which was the Object of Senſe: They ſeem'd to the Men of the World about them, as though they were beſide themſelves, and to act as tho' they hated themſelves; there was nothing in their View, that could induce them thus to ſuffer, and ſupport them under, and carry them thro' ſuch Trials. But altho' there was nothing that was ſeen, nothing that the World ſaw, or that the Chriſtians themſelves ever ſaw with their bodily Eyes, that thus influenced and ſupported 'em; yet they had a ſupernatural Principle of Love to ſomething *unſeen*; they loved Jeſus Chriſt; for they ſaw him ſpiritually, whom the World ſaw not, and whom they themſelves had never ſeen with bodily Eyes.

2. *Joy in Chriſt.* Tho' their outward Sufferings were very grievous, yet their inward ſpiritual Joys were greater than their Sufferings, and theſe ſupported them, and enabled them to ſuffer with Chearfulneſs.

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There are two Things which the Apoſtle takes Notice of in the Text concerning this Joy. 1. The Manner in which it riſes, the Way in which Chriſt, tho' unſeen, is the Foundation of it, *viz.* By Faith; which is the Evidence of Things not ſeen; *In whom, though now ye ſee him not, yet* believing, *ye rejoice*—. 2. The Nature of this Joy; *unſpeakable, and full of Glory. Unſpeakable* in the *Kind* of it; very different from worldly Joys, and carnal Delights; of a vaſtly more pure, ſublime and heavenly Nature, being ſomething ſupernatural, and truly divine, and ſo ineffably excellent; the Sublimity and exquiſite Sweetneſs of which, there were no Words to ſet forth. Unſpeakable alſo in *Degree*; it pleaſing God to give 'em this holy Joy, with a liberal Hand, and in large Meaſure, in their State of Perſecution.

Their Joy was *full of Glory*: Altho' the Joy was unſpeakable, and no Words were ſufficient to deſcribe it; yet ſomething might be ſaid of it, and no Words more fit to repreſent it's Excellency, than theſe, that it was *full of Glory*; or, as it is in the Original, *glorified Joy*. In rejoicing with this Joy, their Minds were filled, as it were, with a glorious Brightneſs, and their Natures exalted and perfected: It was a moſt worthy, noble Rejoicing, that did not corrupt and debaſe the Mind, as many carnal Joys do; but did greatly beautify and dignify it: It was a Prelibation of the Joy of Heaven, that raiſed their Minds to a Degree of heavenly Bleſſedneſs: It fill'd their Minds with the Light of God's Glory, and made 'em themſelves to ſhine with ſome Communication of that Glory.

Hence the Propoſition or Doctrine, that I would raiſe from theſe Words is this,

DOCT. *True Religion, in great Part, conſiſts in holy Affections.*

We ſee that the Apoſtle, in obſerving and remarking the Operations and Exerciſes of Religion, in the Chriſtians he wrote to, wherein their Religion appeared to be

be true and of the right Kind, when it had it's greateſt Trial of what Sort it was, being tried by Perſecution as Gold is tried in the Fire, and when their Religion not only proved true, but was moſt pure, and cleanſed from it's Droſs and Mixtures of that which was not true, and when Religion appeared in them moſt in it's genuine Excellency and native Beauty, and was found to Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory; he ſingles out the religious Affections of *Love* and *Joy*, that were then in exerciſe in them: Theſe are the Exerciſes of Religion he takes Notice of, wherein their Religion did thus appear true and pure, and in it's proper Glory.

Here I would,

I. Shew what is intended by the *Affections*.

II. Obſerve ſome Things which make it evident, that a great Part of true Religion lies in the Affections.

I. It may be enquired, what the Affections of the Mind are?

I anſwer, The Affections are no other, than the more vigorous and ſenſible Exerciſes of the Inclination and Will of the Soul.

God has endued the Soul with two Faculties: One is that by which it is capable of Perception and Speculation, or by which it diſcerns and views and judges of Things; which is called the Underſtanding. The other Faculty is that by which the Soul don't meerly perceive and view Things, but is ſome Way inclin'd with reſpect to the Things it views or conſiders; either is inclined *to 'em*, or is diſinclined, and averſe *from 'em*; or is the Faculty by which the Soul don't behold Things, as an indifferent unaffected Spectator, but either as liking or diſliking, pleas'd or diſpleas'd, approving or rejecting. This Faculty is called by various Names: It is ſometimes called the *Inclination*: And, as it has reſpect to the Actions that are determined and governed by it, is called the *Will*: And the Mind, with regard to the exerciſes of this Faculty, is often called the *Heart*.

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The Exercises of this Faculty are of two Sorts; either those by which the Soul is carried out towards the Things that are in view, in *approving* of them, being pleased with them, and inclined to them; or those in which the Soul opposes the Things that are in view, in *disapproving* them, and in being displeased with them, averse from them, and rejecting them.

And as the Exercises of the Inclination and Will of the Soul are various in their *Kinds*, so they are much more various in their *Degrees*. There are some Exercises of Pleasedness or Displeasedness, Inclination or Disinclination, wherein the Soul is carried but a little beyond a State of perfect Indifference. And there are other Degrees above this, wherein the Approbation or Dislike, Pleasedness or Aversion, are stronger; wherein we may rise higher and higher, 'till the Soul comes to act vigorously and sensibly, and the Actings of the Soul are with that Strength, that (thro' the Laws of the Union which the Creator has fix'd between Soul and Body) the Motion of the Blood and animal Spirits begins to be sensibly alter'd; whence oftentimes arises some bodily Sensation, especially about the Heart and Vitals, that are the Fountain of the Fluids of the Body: From whence it comes to pass, that the Mind, with regard to the Exercises of this Faculty, perhaps in all Nations and Ages, is called *the Heart*. And it is to be noted, that they are these more vigorous and sensible Exercises of this Faculty, that are called the *Affections*.

The *Will*, and the *Affections* of the Soul, are not two Faculties; the Affections are not essentially distinct from the Will, nor do they differ from the meer Actings of the Will and Inclination of the Soul, but only in the Livelineſs and Sensibleness of Exercise.

It must be confessed, that Language is here somewhat imperfect, and the Meaning of Words in a considerable Measure loose and unfixed, and not precisely limited by Custom, which governs the Use of Language. In some Sense, the Affection of the Soul differs nothing at all

from

from the Will and Inclination, and the Will never is in any Exercise any further than it is *affected*; it is not moved out of a State of perfect Indifference, any otherwise than as it is *affected* one Way or other, and acts nothing any further. But yet there are many Actings of the Will and Inclination, that are not so commonly called *Affections:* In every Thing we do, wherein we act voluntarily, there is an Exercise of the Will and Inclination, 'tis our Inclination that governs us in our Actions: But all the Actings of the Inclination and Will, in all our common Actions of Life, are not ordinarily called Affections. Yet, what are commonly called Affections are not essentially different from them, but only in the Degree and Manner of Exercise. In every Act of the Will whatsoever, the Soul either likes or dislikes, is either inclined or disinclined to what is in view: These are not essentially different from those Affections of *Love* and *Hatred:* That Liking or Inclination of the Soul to a Thing, if it be in a high Degree, and be vigorous and lively, is the very same Thing with the Affection of *Love:* And that Disliking and Disinclining, if in a great Degree, is the very same with *Hatred.* In every Act of the Will *for*, or *towards* something not present, the Soul is in some Degree inclined to that Thing; and that Inclination, if in a considerable Degree, is the very same with the Affection of *Desire.* And in every Degree of the Act of the Will, wherein the Soul approves of something present, there is a Degree of Pleasedness; and that Pleasedness, if it be in a considerable Degree, is the very same with the Affection of *Joy* or *Delight.* And if the Will disapproves of what is present, the Soul is in some Degree displeased, and if that Displeasedness be great, 'tis the very same with the Affection of *Grief* or *Sorrow.*

Such seems to be our Nature, and such the Laws of the Union of Soul and Body, that there never is in any Case whatsoever, any lively and vigorous Exercise of the Will or Inclination of the Soul, without some Effect

upon

upon the Body, in ſome Alteration of the Motion of it's Fluids, and eſpecially of the animal Spirits. And on the other Hand, from the ſame Laws of the Union of Soul and Body, the Conſtitution of the Body, and the Motion of it's Fluids, may promote the Exerciſe of the Affections. But yet, it is not the Body, but the Mind only, that is the proper Seat of the Affections. The Body of Man is no more capable of being really the Subject of Love or Hatred, Joy or Sorrow, Fear or Hope, than the Body of a Tree, or than the ſame Body of Man is capable of thinking and underſtanding. As 'tis the Soul only that has Ideas, ſo 'tis the Soul only that is pleaſed or diſpleaſed with it's Ideas. As 'tis the Soul only that thinks, ſo 'tis the Soul only that loves or hates, rejoices or is grieved at what it thinks of. Nor are theſe Motions of the animal Spirits, and Fluids of the Body, any Thing properly belonging to the Nature of the Affections; tho' they always accompany them, in the preſent State; but are only Effects or Concomitants of the Affections, that are entirely diſtinct from the Affections themſelves, and no Way eſſential to them; ſo that an unbodied Spirit may be as capable of Love and Hatred, Joy or Sorrow, Hope or Fear, or other Affections, as one that is united to a Body.

The *Affections* and *Paſſions* are frequently ſpoken of as the ſame; and yet, in the more common Uſe of Speech, there is in ſome Reſpect a Difference; and *Affection* is a Word, that in it's ordinary Signification, ſeems to be ſomething more extenſive than *Paſſion*; being uſed for all vigorous lively Actings of the Will or Inclination; but Paſſion for thoſe that are more ſudden, and whoſe Effects on the animal Spirits are more violent, and the Mind more overpower'd, and leſs in its own Command.

As all the Exerciſes of the Inclination and Will, are either in approving and liking, or diſapproving and rejecting; ſo the Affections are of two Sorts; they are thoſe by which the Soul is carried out to what is in view, cleaving

cleaving *to* it, or *seeking* it; or those by which it is averse *from* it, and *opposes* it.

Of the former Sort are *Love*, *Desire*, *Hope*, *Joy*, *Gratitude*, *Complacence*. Of the latter Kind, are *Hatred*, *Fear*, *Anger*, *Grief*, and such like; which it is needless now to stand particularly to define.

And there are some Affections wherein there is a Composition of each of the aforementioned Kinds of Actings of the Will; as in the Affection of *Pity*, there is something of the *former Kind*, towards the Person suffering, and something of the *Latter*, towards what he suffers. And so in *Zeal*, there is in it high *Approbation* of some Person or Thing, together with vigorous *Opposition* to what is conceived to be contrary to it.

There are other mixt Affections that might be also mention'd, but I hasten to the

IId. Thing proposed, Which was to observe some Things that render it evident, that true Religion, in great Part, consists in the Affections. And here,

1. What has been said of the Nature of the Affections, makes this evident, and may be sufficient, without adding any Thing further, to put this Matter out of Doubt: For who will deny, that true Religion consists, in a great Measure, in vigorous and lively Actings of the *Inclination* and *Will* of the Soul, or the fervent Exercises of the *Heart*.

That Religion which God requires, and will accept, don't consist in weak, dull and lifeless Wouldings, raising us but a little above a State of Indifference: God, in his Word, greatly insists upon it, that we be in good Earnest, *fervent in Spirit*, and our Hearts vigorously engaged in Religion: Rom. xii. 11. *Be ye fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.* Deut. x. 12. *And now* Israel, *What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his Ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul?* And Chap. vi. 4, 5. *Hear, O*

Iſrael; *the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might.* 'Tis ſuch a fervent, vigorous Engagedneſs of the Heart in Religion, that is the Fruit of a real Circumciſion of the Heart, or true Regeneration, and that has the Promiſes of Life; Deut. xxx. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumciſe thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayeſt live.*

If we ben't in good earneſt in Religion, and our Wills and Inclinations ben't ſtrongly exerciſed, we are Nothing. The Things of Religion are ſo great, that there can be no Suitableneſs in the Exerciſes of our Hearts to their Nature and Importance, unleſs they be lively and powerful. In nothing, is Vigour in the Actings of our Inclinations ſo requiſite, as in Religion; and in nothing is Lukewarmneſs ſo odious. True Religion is evermore a powerful Thing; and the Power of it appears, in the firſt Place, in the inward Exerciſes of it in the Heart, where is the principal and original Seat of it. Hence true Religion is called the *Power of Godlineſs*, in Diſtinction from the external Appearances of it, that are *the Form* of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. *Having a Form of Godlineſs, but denying the Power of it.* The Spirit of God, in thoſe that have ſound and ſolid Religion, is a Spirit of powerful holy Affection; and therefore, God is ſaid *to have given them the Spirit of Power, and of Love, and of a ſound Mind*, 2 Tim. i. 7. And ſuch, when they receive the Spirit of God, in his ſanctifying and ſaving Influences, are ſaid to be *baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire*; by reaſon of the Power and Fervour of thoſe Exerciſes the Spirit of God excites in their Hearts, whereby their Hearts, when Grace is in exerciſe, may be ſaid to *burn within them*; as is ſaid of the Diſciples, *Luke* xxiv. 32.

The Buſineſs of Religion is, from Time to Time, compared to thoſe Exerciſes, wherein Men are wont to have their Hearts and Strength greatly exerciſed and engaged;

engaged; ſuch as Running, Wreſtling or Agonizing for a great Prize or Crown, and Fighting with ſtrong Enenemies that ſeek our Lives, and Warring as thoſe that by Violence take a City or Kingdom.

And tho' true Grace has various Degrees, and there are ſome that are but Babes in Chriſt, in whom the Exerciſe of the Inclination and Will towards divine and heavenly Things, is comparatively weak; yet every one that has the Power of Godlineſs in his Heart, has his Inclinations and Heart exerciſed towards God and divine Things, with ſuch Strength and Vigour, that theſe holy Exerciſes do prevail in him above all carnal or natural Affections, and are effectual to overcome them: For every true Diſciple of Chriſt, *loves him above Father or Mother, Wife and Children, Brethren and Siſters, Houſes and Lands; yea, than his own Life.* From hence it follows, that wherever true Religion is, there are vigorous Exerciſes of the Inclination and Will, towards divine Objects: But by what was ſaid before, the vigorous, lively and ſenſible Exerciſes of the Will, are no other than the Affections of the Soul.

2. The Author of the human Nature has not only given Affections to Men, but has made 'em very much the Spring of Men's Actions. As the Affections do not only neceſſarily belong to the human Nature, but are a very great Part of it; ſo (inaſmuch as by Regeneration, Perſons are renewed in the whole Man, and ſanctified throughout) holy Affections do not only neceſſarily belong to true Religion, but are a very great Part of that. And as true Religion is of a practical Nature, and God hath ſo conſtituted the human Nature, that the Affections are very much the Spring of Men's Actions, this alſo ſhews, that true Religion muſt conſiſt very much in the Affections.

Such is Man's Nature, that he is very unactive, any otherwiſe than he is influenc'd by ſome Affection, either *Love* or *Hatred*, *Deſire*, *Hope*, *Fear* or ſome other.

Theſe Affections we ſee to be the Springs that ſet Men a going, in all the Affairs of Life, and engage them in all their Purſuits: Theſe are the Things that put Men forward, and carry 'em along, in all their wordly Buſineſs; and eſpecially are Men excited and animated by theſe, in all Affairs, wherein they are earneſtly engaged, and which they purſue with Vigour. We ſee the World of Mankind to be exceeding buſy and active; and the Affections of Men are the Springs of the Motion: Take away all *Love* and *Hatred*, all *Hope* and *Fear*, all *Anger*, *Zeal* and affectionate *Deſire*, and the World would be, in a great Meaſure, motionleſs and dead; there would be no ſuch Thing as Activity amongſt Mankind, or any earneſt Purſuit whatſoever. 'Tis Affection that engages the covetous Man, and him that is greedy of worldly Profits, in his Purſuits; and it is by the Affections, that the ambitious Man is put forward in his Purſuit of worldly Glory; and 'tis the Affections alſo that actuate the voluptuous Man, in his Purſuit of Pleaſure and ſenſual Delights: The World continues, from Age to Age, in a continual Commotion and Agitation, in a Purſuit of theſe Things; but take away all Affection, and the Spring of all this Motion would be gone, and the Motion itſelf would ceaſe. And as in worldly Things, worldly Affections are very much the Spring of Men's Motion and Action; ſo in religious Matters, the Spring of their Actions are very much religious Affections: He that has doctrinal Knowledge and Speculation only, without Affection, never is engaged in the Buſineſs of Religion.

3. Nothing is more manifeſt *in Fact*, than that the Things of Religion take hold of Men's Souls no further than they *affect* them. There are Multitudes that often hear the Word of God, and therein hear of thoſe Things that are infinitely great and important, and that moſt nearly concern them, and all that is heard ſeems to be wholly ineffectual upon them, and to make no Alteration

ration in their Diſpoſition or Behaviour; and the Reaſon is, they are not affected with what they hear. There are many that often hear of the glorious Perfections of God, his almighty Power, and boundleſs Wiſdom, his infinite Majeſty, and that Holineſs of God, by which he is of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, and cannot look on Iniquity, and the Heavens are not pure in his Sight, and of God's infinite Goodneſs and Mercy, and hear of the great Works of God's Wiſdom, Power and Goodneſs, wherein there appear the admirable Manifeſtations of theſe Perfections; they hear particularly of the unſpeakable Love of God and Chriſt, and of the great Things that Chriſt has done and ſuffer'd, and of the great Things of another World, of eternal Miſery, in bearing the Fierceneſs and Wrath of almighty God, and of endleſs Bleſſedneſs and Glory in the Preſence of God, and the Enjoyment of his dear Love; they alſo hear the peremptory Commands of God, and his gracious Counſels and Warnings, and the ſweet Invitations of the Goſpel; I ſay, they often hear theſe Things, and yet remain as they were before, with no ſenſible Alteration on them, either in Heart or Practice, becauſe they are not affected with what they hear; and ever will be ſo 'till they are affected. I am bold to aſſert, that there never was any conſiderable Change wrought in the Mind or Converſation of any one Perſon, by any Thing of a religious Nature, that ever he read, heard or ſaw, that had not his Affections mov'd. Never was a natural Man engaged earneſtly to ſeek his Salvation: Never were any ſuch brought to cry after Wiſdom, and lift up their Voice for Underſtanding, and to wreſtle with God in Prayer for Mercy; and never was one humbled, and brought to the Foot of God, from any Thing that ever he heard or imagined of his own Unworthineſs and Deſervings of God's Diſpleaſure; nor was ever one induced to fly for Refuge unto Chriſt, while his Heart remained unaffected. Nor was there ever a Saint awakened out of a cold, lifeleſs Frame, or recovered from a declining

State

State in Religion, and brought back from a lamentable Departure from God, without having his Heart affected. And in a Word, there never was any Thing conſiderable brought to paſs in the Heart or Life of any Man living, by the Things of Religion, that had not his Heart deeply affected by thoſe Things.

4. The holy Scriptures do every where place Religion very much in the Affections; ſuch as Fear, Hope, Love, Hatred, Deſire, Joy, Sorrow, Gratitude, Compaſſion and Zeal.

The Scriptures place much of Religion in godly *Fear*; inſomuch that 'tis often ſpoken of as the Character of thoſe that are truly religious Perſons, that they *tremble at God's Word*, that they *fear before him*, that *their Fleſh trembles for Fear of him*, and that *they are afraid of his Judgments*, that *his Excellency makes them afraid, and his Dread falls upon them*; and the like: And a Compellation commonly given the Saints in Scripture, is, *Fearers of God*, or *they that fear the Lord*. And becauſe the Fear of God is a great Part of true Godlineſs, hence true Godlineſs in general, is very commonly called by the Name of *the Fear of God*; as every one knows, that knows any Thing of the Bible.

So *Hope* in God and in the Promiſes of his Word, is often ſpoken of in the Scripture, as a very conſiderable Part of true Religion. 'Tis mentioned as one of the three great Things of which Religion conſiſts, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13. Hope in the Lord is alſo frequently mentioned as the Character of the Saints: Pſal. cxlvi. 5. *Happy is he that hath the God of* Jacob *for his Help, whoſe Hope is in the Lord his God.* Jer. xvii. 7. *Bleſſed is the Man that truſteth in the Lord, whoſe Hope the Lord is.* Pſal. xxxi. 24. *Be of good Courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen your Heart, all ye that Hope in the Lord.* And the like in many other Places. Religious Fear and Hope are, once and again, joined together, as jointly conſtituting the Character of the true Saints. Pſal. xxxiii.

18.

18. *Behold the Eye of the Lord is upon them that* Fear *him, upon them that* Hope *in his Mercy.* Pſal. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh Pleaſure in them that* Fear *him, in thoſe that* Hope *in his Mercy.* Hope is ſo great a Part of true Religion, that the Apoſtle ſays *we are ſaved by Hope,* Rom. viii. 24. And this is ſpoken of as the Helmet of the Chriſtian Soldier; 1 Theſ. v. 8. *And for an Helmet, the Hope of Salvation;* and the ſure and ſtedfaſt Anchor of the Soul, which preſerves it from being caſt away by the Storms of this evil World, Heb. vi. 19. *Which Hope we have, as an Anchor of the Soul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and which entereth into that within the Veil.* 'Tis ſpoken of as a great Fruit and Benefit which true Saints receive by Chriſt's Reſurrection; 1 Pet. i. 3. *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the Dead.*

The Scriptures place Religion very much in the Affection of *Love,* in Love to God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and Love to the People of God, and to Mankind. The Texts in which this is manifeſt, both in the Old Teſtament, and New, are innumerable. But of this more afterwards.

The contrary Affection of *Hatred* alſo, as having Sin for its Object, is ſpoken of in Scripture, as no inconſiderable Part of true Religion. It is ſpoken of as that by which true Religion may be known and diſtinguiſhed, Prov. viii. 13. *The Fear of the Lord is to hate Evil.* And accordingly the Saints are called upon to give Evidence of their Sincerity by this, Pſal. xcvii. 10. *Ye that fear the Lord hate Evil.* And the Pſalmiſt often mentions it as an Evidence of his Sincerity; Pſal. ci. 2, 3. *I will walk within my Houſe with a perfect Heart; I will ſet no wicked Thing before mine Eyes: I hate the Work of them that turn aſide.* Pſal. cxix. 104. *I hate every falſe Way.* So Verſe 128. Again Pſal. cxxxix. 21. *Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee.*

So

So holy *Deſire*, exerciſed in Longings, Hungrings and Thirſtings after God and Holineſs, is often mention'd in Scripture as an important Part of true Religion; Iſai. xxvi. 8. *The Deſire of our Soul is to thy Name, and to the Remembrance of thee.* Pſal. xxvii. 4. *One Thing have I deſired of the Lord, and that will I ſeek after; that I may dwell in the Houſe of the Lord, all the Days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple.* Pſal. xlii. 1, 2. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God; My Soul thirſteth for God, for the living God: When ſhall I come and appear before God?* Pſal. lxiii. 1, 2. *My Soul thirſteth for thee; my Fleſh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirſty Land, where no Water is, to ſee thy Power and thy Glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the Sanctuary.* Pſal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hoſts! My Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the Courts of the Lord; my Heart and my Fleſh crieth out for the living God.* Pſal. cxix. 20. *My Soul breaketh for the Longing it hath unto thy Judgments, at all Times.* So *Pſal.* lxxiii. 25. and cxliii. 6, 7. and cxxx. 6. *Cant.* iii. 1, 2. and vi. 8. Such a holy Deſire and Thirſt of Soul is mentioned, as one of thoſe great Things which renders or denotes a Man truly bleſſed, in the Beginning of Chriſt's Sermon on the Mount, Matth. v. 6. *Bleſſed are they that do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled.* And this holy Thirſt is ſpoken of, as a great Thing in the Condition of a Participation of the Bleſſings of eternal Life, Rev. xxi. 6. *I will give unto him that is athirſt, of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely.*

The Scriptures ſpeak of holy *Joy*, as a great Part of true Religion. So is it repreſented in the Text. And as an important Part of Religion, it is often exhorted to, and preſs'd, with great Earneſtneſs; Pſal. xxxvii. 4. *Delight thyſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the Deſires of thine Heart.* Pſal. xcvii. 12. *Rejoice in the Lord, ye Righteous.* So Pſal. xxxiii. 1. *Rejoice in the Lord, O*

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ye Righteous. Matth. v. 12. *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad.* Phil. iii 1. *Finally Brethren, rejoice in the Lord.* And Chap. iv. 4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice.* 1 Thes. v. 16. *Rejoice evermore.* Psal. cxlix. 2. *Let* Israel *rejoice in him that made him; let the Children of* Zion *be joyful in their King.* This is mentioned among the principal Fruits of the Spirit of Grace, Gal. v. 22. *The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy,* &c.— The Psalmist mentions his holy Joy, as an Evidence of his Sincerity, Psal. cxix. 14. *I have rejoiced in the Way of thy Testimonies, as much as in all Riches.*

Religious *Sorrow*, Mourning, and Brokenness of Heart, are also frequently spoken of as a great Part of true Religion. These Things are often mentioned as distinguishing Qualities of the true Saints, and a great Part of their Character; Matth. v. 4. *Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.* Psal. xxxiv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite Spirit.* Isai. lxi. 1, 2. *The Lord hath anointed me—to bind up the broken-hearted,— to comfort all that mourn.* This godly Sorrow, and Brokenness of Heart is often spoken of, not only as a great Thing in the distinguishing Character of the Saints, but that in them, which is peculiarly acceptable and pleasing to God; Psal. li. 17. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* Isai. lvii. 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy Place, with him also that is of a humble and contrite Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite Ones.* Chap. lxvi. 2. *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit.*

Another Affection often mentioned, as that in the Exercise of which much of true Religion appears, is *Gratitude*; especially as exercised in Thankfulness and Praise to God. This being so much spoken of in the Book of Psalms, and other Parts of the holy Scriptures, I need not mention particular Texts. Again,

Again, The holy Scriptures do frequently ſpeak of *Compaſſion* or *Mercy*, as a very great and eſſential Thing in true Religion; inſomuch that good Men are in Scripture denominated from hence; and a merciful Man, and a good Man, are equivalent Terms in Scripture; Iſai. lvii. 1. *The* Righteous *periſheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart*; *and* merciful Men *are taken away.* And the Scripture chooſes out this Quality, as that by which, in a peculiar Manner, a rightous Man in decypher'd; Pſal. 37. 21. *The* Rightous *ſheweth* Mercy, *and giveth*; and Ver. 26. *He is ever* merciful, *and lendeth.* And Prov. 14, 3. *He that honoureth the Lord, hath Mercy on the Poor.* And Col. iii. 12. *Put ye on, as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved*, Bowels of Mercies, *&c.* This is one of thoſe great Things, by which thoſe who are truly Bleſſed are deſcribed by our Saviour, Matth. v. 7. *Bleſſed are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy.* And this Chriſt alſo ſpeaks of, as one of the weightier Matters of the Law, Matth. xxiii. 23. *Wo unto you Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites*; *for ye pay Tythe of Mint, and Anniſe, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment*, Mercy, *and Faith.* To the like Purpoſe is that, Mic. vi. 8. *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good: And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do Juſtice, and love* Mercy, *and walk humbly with thy God?* And alſo that, Hoſ. vi. 6. *For I deſired* Mercy, *and not Sacrifice.* Which ſeems to have been a Text much delighted in by our Saviour, by his Manner of citing it once and again; *Matth.* ix. 13. and xii. 7.

Zeal is alſo ſpoken of, as a very eſſential Part of the Religion of true Saints. 'Tis ſpoken of as a great Thing Chriſt had in View, in giving himſelf for our Redemption; Tit. ii. 14. *Who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People*, zealous *of good Works.* And this is ſpoken of, as the great Thing wanting in the luke-warm *Laodiceans*, Rev. iii. 15, 16, 19.

I have mentioned but a few Texts, out of an innumerable Multitude, all over the Scripture, which place Religion very much in the Affections. But what has been obſerved, may be ſufficient to ſhew, that they who would deny that much of true Religion lies in the Affections, and maintain the Contrary, muſt throw away what we have been wont to own for our Bible, and get ſome other Rule, by which to judge of the Nature of Religion.

5. The Scriptures do repreſent true Religion, as being ſummarily comprehended in *Love*, the Chief of the Affections, and Fountain of all other Affections.

So our bleſſed Saviour repreſents the Matter, in anſwer to the Lawyer, who aſked him, which was the great Commandment of the Law. Matth. xxii. 37, 38, 39, 40. *Jeſus ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind: This is the firſt, and great Commandment; and the ſecond is like unto it: Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf. On theſe two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.* Which laſt Words ſignify as much, as that theſe two Commandments comprehend all the Duty preſcribed, and the Religion taught in the Law and the Prophets. And the Apoſtle *Paul* does from Time to Time make the ſame Repreſentation of the Matter; as in Rom. xiii. 8. *He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law.* And Ver. 10. *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.* And Gal. v. 14. *For all the Law is fulfilled in one Word, even in this, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thyſelf.* So likewiſe in 1 Tim. i. 5. *Now the End of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart*, &c. So the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks of Love, as the greateſt Thing in Religion, and as the Vitals, Eſſence and Soul of it; without which, the greateſt Knowledge and Gifts, and the moſt glaring Profeſſion, and every Thing elſe which appertains to Religion, are vain and worthleſs; and repreſents it as the Fountain from whence

proceeds

proceeds all that is good, in 1 *Cor.* xiii. throughout; for that which is there rendered *Charity*, in the Original is *Agape*, the proper Engliſh of which is *Love.*

Now altho' it be true, that the Love thus ſpoken of, includes the Whole of a benevolent Propenſity of the Soul, towards God and Man; yet it may be conſidered, that it is evident from what has been before obſerved, that this Propenſity or Inclination of the Soul, when in ſenſible and vigorous Exerciſe, becomes *Affection*, and is no other than affectionate Love. And ſurely it is ſuch vigorous and fervent Love which Chriſt ſpeaks of, as the Sum of all Religion, when he ſpeaks of Loving God with all our Hearts, with all our Souls, and with all our Minds, and our Neighbour as ourſelves, as the Sum of all that was taught and preſcribed in the Law and the Prophets.

Indeed it cannot be ſuppoſed, when this Affection of Love is here, and in other Scriptures, ſpoken of as the Sum of all Religion, that hereby is meant the Act, excluſive of the Habit, or that the Exerciſe of the Underſtanding is excluded, which is implied in all reaſonable Affection. But it is doubtleſs true, and evident from theſe Scriptures, that the *Eſſence* of all true Religion lies in holy Love; and that in this divine Affection, and an habitual Diſpoſition to it, and that Light which is the Foundation of it, and thoſe Things which are the Fruits of it, conſiſts the *Whole* of Religion.

From hence it clearly and certainly appears, that great Part of true Religion conſiſts in the Affections. For Love is not only one of the Affections, but it is the firſt and chief of the Affections, and the Fountain of all the Affections. From *Love* ariſes *Hatred* of thoſe Things which are contrary to what we love, or which oppoſe and thwart us in thoſe Things that we delight in: And from the various Exerciſes of Love and Hatred, according to the Circumſtances of the Objects of theſe Affections, as preſent or abſent, certain or uncertain, probable or improbable, ariſe all thoſe other Affections of

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Desire, *Hope*, *Fear*, *Joy*, *Grief*, *Gratitude*, *Anger*, &c. From a vigorous, affectionate, and fervent *Love to God*, will necessarily arise other *religious* Affections: hence will arise an intense *Hatred* and Abhorrence of Sin, *Fear* of Sin, and a *Dread* of God's Displeasure, *Gratitude* to God for his Goodness, *Complacence* and *Joy* in God, when God is graciously and sensibly present, and *Grief* when he is absent, and a joyful *Hope* when a future Enjoyment of God is expected, and fervent *Zeal* for the Glory of God. And in like Manner, from a fervent *Love to Men*, will arise all other vertuous Affections towards Men.

6. The Religion of the most eminent Saints we have an Account of in the Scripture, consisted much in holy *Affections*.

I shall take particular Notice of three eminent Saints, which have express'd the Frame and Sentiments of their own Hearts, and so described their own Religion, and the Manner of their Intercourse with God, in the Writings which they have left us, that are a Part of the sacred Canon.

The *first* Instance I shall take Notice of, is *David*, that *Man after God's own Heart*; who has given us a lively Portraiture of his Religion, in the Book of *Psalms*. Those holy Songs of his, he has there left us, are nothing else but the Expressions and Breathings of devout and holy *Affections*; such as an humble and fervent *Love* to God, *Admiration* of his glorious Perfections and wonderful Works, earnest *Desires*, Thirstings and Pantings of Soul after God, *Delight* and *Joy* in God, a sweet and melting *Gratitude* to God for his great Goodness, an holy *Exultation* and Triumph of Soul in the Favour, Sufficiency and Faithfulness of God, his *Love* to, and *Delight* in the Saints the Excellent of the Earth, his great *Delight* in the Word and Ordinances of God, his *Grief* for his own and others Sins, and his fervent *Zeal* for God, and against the Enemies of God

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and his Church. And theſe Expreſſions of holy Affection, which the Pſalms of *David* are every where full of, are the more to our preſent Purpoſe, becauſe thoſe Pſalms are not only the Expreſſions of the Religion of ſo eminent a Saint, that God ſpeaks of as ſo agreeable to his Mind; but were alſo, by the Direction of the Holy Ghoſt, penn'd for the Uſe of the Church of God in its publick Worſhip, not only in that Age, but in after Ages; as being fitted to expreſs the Religion of all Saints, in all Ages, as well as the Religion of the Pſalmiſt. And it is moreover to be obſerved, that *David*, in the Book of Pſalms, ſpeaks not as a private Perſon, but as the *Pſalmiſt of Iſrael*, as the ſubordinate Head of the Church of God, and Leader in their Worſhip and Praiſes; and in many of the Pſalms, ſpeaks in the Name of Chriſt, as perſonating him in theſe Breathings forth of holy Affection, and in many other Pſalms, he ſpeaks in the Name of the Church.

Another Inſtance I ſhall obſerve, is the Apoſtle *Paul*; who was, in many Reſpects, the Chief of all the Miniſters of the New-Teſtament; being above all others, a choſen Veſſel unto Chriſt, to bear his Name before the Gentiles, and made the chief Inſtrument of propagating and eſtabliſhing the Chriſtian Church in the World, and of diſtinctly revealing the glorious Myſteries of the Goſpel, for the Inſtruction of the Church in all Ages; and (as has not been improbably thought by ſome) the moſt eminent Servant of Chriſt that ever lived, received to the higheſt Rewards in the heavenly Kingdom of his Maſter. By what is ſaid of him in the Scripture, he appears to have been a Perſon that was full of Affection. And 'tis very manifeſt, that the Religion he expreſſes in his Epiſtles, conſiſted very much in holy Affections. It appears by all his Expreſſions of himſelf, that he was, in the Courſe of his Life, enflamed, actuated and entirely ſwallowed up, by a moſt ardent *Love* to his glorious Lord, eſteeming all Things as Loſs, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of him, and eſteeming them but

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Dung that he might win him. He repreſents himſelf, as overpower'd by this holy Affection, and as it were compelled by it to go forward in his Service, thro' all Difficulties and Sufferings, 2 *Cor.* v. 14, 15. And his Epiſtles are full of Expreſſions of an overflowing Affection towards the People of Chriſt: He ſpeaks of his *dear Love* to them, 2 *Cor.* xii. 19. *Phil.* iv. 1. 2 *Tim.* i. 2. Of his *abundant Love*, 2 Cor. ii. 4. And of his *affectionate and tender Love*, as of a Nurſe towards her Children, 1 Theſſ. ii. 7, 8. *But we were gentle among you; even as a Nurſe cheriſheth her Children; ſo being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Goſpel of God only, but alſo our own Souls, becauſe ye were dear unto us.* So alſo he ſpeaks of his *Bowels of Love*, Phil. i. 8. Philem. v. 12, and 20. So he ſpeaks of his *earneſt Care* for others, 2 Cor. viii. 16. and of his *Bowels of Pity* or *Mercy* towards them, *Phil.* ii. 1. and of his Concern for others, even to *Anguiſh of Heart*, 2 Cor. ii. 4. *For out of much Affliction, and Anguiſh of Heart, I wrote unto you, with many Tears; not that ye ſhould be grieved; but that ye might know the Love which I have more abundantly unto you.* He ſpeaks of the *great Conflict* of his Soul for them, *Col.* ii. 1. He ſpeaks of *great and continual Grief* that he had *in his Heart* from *Compaſſion* to the *Jews*, Rom. ix. 2. He ſpeaks of *his Mouth's being open'd, and his Heart enlarged* towards Chriſtians, 2 Cor. vi. 11. *O ye* Corinthians, *our Mouth is open unto you, our Heart is enlarged!* He often ſpeaks of his *affectionate and longing Deſires*, 1 *Theſ.* ii. 8. *Rom.* i. 11. *Phil.* i. 8. and Chap. iv. 1. 2 *Tim.* i. 4. The ſame Apoſtle is very often, in his Epiſtles, expreſſing the Affection of *Joy*, 2 *Cor.* i. 12. and Chap. vii. 7. and V. 9, and 16. *Phil.* i. 4. and Chap. ii. 1, 2. and Chap. iii. 3. *Col.* i. 24. 1 *Theſ.* iii. 9. He ſpeaks of his *rejoicing with great Joy*, *Phil.* iv. 10. *Philem.* i. 7. of his *joying and rejoicing*, Phil. ii. 1, 7. and of his *rejoicing exceedingly*, 2 Cor. vii. 13. And of his being *filled with Comfort, and being exceeding joyful*, 2 Cor. vii. 4.

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He ſpeaks of himſelf as *always rejoicing*, 2 Cor. vi. 10. So he ſpeaks of the *Triumphs* of his Soul, 2 Cor. ii. 14. And of *his glorying in Tribulation*, 2 Theſ. i. 4. and Rom. v. 3. He alſo expreſſes the Affection of *Hope*; in Phil. i. 20. he ſpeaks of his *earneſt Expectation*, and *his Hope*. He likewiſe expreſſes an Affection of *Godly Jealouſy*, 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. And it appears by his whole Hiſtory, after his Converſion, in the *Acts*, and alſo by all his *Epiſtles*, and the Accounts he gives of himſelf there, That the Affection of *Zeal*, as having the Cauſe of his Maſter, and the Intereſt and Proſperity of his Church, for its Object, was mighty in him, continually inflaming his Heart, ſtrongly engaging to thoſe great and conſtant Labours he went through, in inſtructing, exhorting, warning and reproving others, *travailing in Birth with them*; conflicting with thoſe powerful and innumerable Enemies who continually oppoſed him, wreſtling with Principalities and Powers, not fighting as one who beats the Air, running the Race ſet before him, continually preſſing forwards through all Manner of Difficulties and Sufferings; ſo that others thought him quite beſide himſelf. And how full he was of Affection, does further appear by his being ſo full of Tears: In 2 *Cor.* ii. 4. he ſpeaks of his *many Tears*, and ſo *Acts* xx. 19. And of his *Tears* that he ſhed *continually*, *Night and Day*, v. 31.

Now if any one can conſider theſe Accounts given in the Scripture of this great Apoſtle, and which he gives of himſelf, and yet not ſee, that his Religion conſiſted much in Affection, muſt have a ſtrange Faculty of managing his Eyes, to ſhut out the Light which ſhines moſt full in his Face.

The other Inſtance I ſhall mention, is of the Apoſtle *John*, that beloved Diſciple, who was the neareſt and deareſt to his Maſter of any of the Twelve, and was by him admitted to the greateſt Privileges of any of them: Being not only one of the three who were admitted to be preſent with him in the Mount at his Tranſfiguration

figuration, and at the raiſing of *Jairus*'s Daughter, and whom he took with him when he was in his Agony, and one of the three ſpoken of by the Apoſtle *Paul*, as the the three main Pillars of the Chriſtian Church; but was favour'd above all, in being admitted to lean on his Maſter's Boſom, at his laſt Supper, and in being choſen by Chriſt, as the Diſciple to whom he would reveal his wonderful Diſpenſations towards his Church, to the End of Time; as we have an Account in the Book of *Revelation:* And to ſhut up the Canon of the New-Teſtament, and of the whole Scripture; being preſerved much longer than all the reſt of the Apoſtles, to ſet all Things in Order in the Chriſtian Church, after their Death.

It is evident by all his Writings, (as is generally obſerved by Divines) that he was a Perſon remarkably full of Affection: His Addreſſes to thoſe whom he wrote to, being inexpreſſibly tender and pathetical, breathing nothing but the moſt fervent Love; as tho' he were all made up of ſweet and holy Affection. The Proofs of which can't be given without Diſadvantage, unleſs we ſhould tranſcribe his whole Writings.

7. He whom God ſent into the World, to be the Light of the World, and Head of the whole Church, and the perfect Example of true Religion and Vertue, for the Imitation of all, the Shepherd whom the whole Flock ſhould follow wherever he goes, even the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, was a Perſon who was remarkably of a tender and affectionate Heart; and his Vertue was expreſs'd very much in the Exerciſe of holy Affections. He was the greateſt Inſtance of Ardency, Vigour and Strength of *Love*, to both God and Man, that ever was. It was theſe Affections which got the Victory, in that mighty Struggle and Conflict of his Affections, in his Agonies, when *he prayed more earneſtly, and offered ſtrong Crying and Tears*, and wreſtled in Tears and in Blood. Such was the Power of the Exerciſes of his

holy Love, that they were ſtronger than Death, and in that great ſtruggle, overcame thoſe ſtrong Exerciſes of the natural Affections of Fear and Grief, when he was ſore amazed, and his Soul was exceeding ſorrowful, even unto Death. And he alſo appear'd to be full of Affection, in the Courſe of his Life. We read of his great *Zeal*, fulfilling that in the 69th Pſalm, *The Zeal of thine Houſe hath eaten me up*, John ii. 17. We read of his *Grief* for the Sins of Men, Mark iii. 5. *He looked round about on them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardneſs of their Hearts.* And his breaking forth in Tears and Exclamations, from the Conſideration of the Sin and Miſery of ungodly Men, and on the Sight of the City of *Jeruſalem*, which was full of ſuch Inhabitants, Luke xix. 41, 42. *And when he was come near, he beheld the City, and wept over it, ſaying, if thou had'ſt known, even thou, at leaſt in this thy Day, the Things which belong unto thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* With Chap. xiii. 34. *O* Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *which killeſt the Prophets, and ſtoneſt them that are ſent unto thee. How often would I have gathered thy Children together, as a Hen doth gather her Brood under her Wings, and ye would not!* We read of Chriſt's earneſt *Deſire*, Luke xxii. 15. *With Deſire have I deſired to eat this Paſſover with you, before I ſuffer.* We often read of the Affection of *Pity* or *Compaſſion* in Chriſt, *Matth.* xv. 32, and xviii. 34. *Luke* vii. 13, and of his *being moved with Compaſſion*, Matth. ix. 36, and xiv. 14, and Mark vi. 34. And how tender did his Heart appear to be, on occaſion of *Mary*'s and *Martha*'s Mourning for their Brother, and coming to him with their Complaints and Tears: Their Tears ſoon drew Tears from his Eyes: He was affected with their Grief, and *wept* with them; tho' he knew their Sorrow ſhould ſo ſoon be turned into Joy, by their Brother's being raiſed from the Dead; ſee *John* xi. And how ineffably affectionate was that laſt and dying Diſcourſe, which Jeſus had with his eleven Diſciples the Evening before he was crucified?

when

when he told them he was going away, and foretold them the great Difficulties and Sufferings they ſhould meet with in the World, when he was gone; and comforted and counſeled them, as his dear little Children, and bequeathed to them his holy Spirit, and therein his Peace, and his Comfort and Joy, as it were in his laſt Will and Teſtament, in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Chapters of *John*; and concluded the Whole with that affectionate interceſſory Prayer for them, and his whole Church, in Chap. xvii. Of all the Diſcourſes ever penn'd, or utter'd by the Mouth of any Man, this ſeems to be the moſt affectionate and affecting.

8. The Religion of Heaven conſiſts very much in Affection.

There is doubtleſs true Religion in Heaven, and true Religion in it's utmoſt Purity and Perfection. But according to the Scripture Repreſentation of the heavenly State, the Religion of Heaven conſiſts chiefly in holy and mighty *Love* and *Joy*, and the Expreſſion of theſe in moſt fervent and exalted Praiſes. So that the Religion of the Saints in Heaven, conſiſts in the ſame Things with that Religion of the Saints on Earth, which is ſpoken of in our Text, viz. *Love* and *Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory*. Now it would be very fooliſh to pretend, that becauſe the Saints in Heaven be not united to Fleſh and Blood, and have no animal Fluids to be moved, (through the Laws of Union of Soul and Body) with thoſe great Emotions of their Souls, that therefore their exceeding Love and Joy are no Affections.—We are not ſpeaking of the Affections of the Body, but of the Affections of the Soul, the Chief of which are *Love* and *Joy*. When theſe are in the Soul, whether that be in the Body or out of it, the Soul is affected and moved. And when they are in the Soul, in that Strength in which they are in the Saints in Heaven, the Soul is mightily affected and moved, or, which is the ſame Thing, has great Affections. 'Tis true, we don't expe-

rimentally know what Love and Joy are in a Soul out of a Body, or in a glorified Body; *i. e.* we have not had Experience of Love and Joy in a Soul in theſe Circumſtances; but the Saints on Earth do know what divine Love and Joy in the Soul are, and they know what Love and Joy are of the ſame Kind, with the Love and Joy which are in Heaven, in ſeparate Souls there. The Love and Joy of the Saints on Earth, is the Beginning and Dawning of the Light, Life, and Bleſſedneſs of Heaven, and is like their Love and Joy there; or rather, the ſame in Nature, tho' not the ſame with it, or like to it, in Degree and Circumſtances. This is evident by many Scriptures, as *Prov.* iv. 18. *John* iv. 14. and *Chap.* vi. 40, 47, 50, 51, 54, 58. 1 *John* iii. 15. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. 'Tis unreaſonable therefore to ſuppoſe, that the Love and Joy of the Saints in Heaven, not only differ in Degree and Circumſtances, from the holy Love and Joy of the Saints on Earth, but is ſo entirely different in Nature, that they are no Affections; and merely becauſe they have no Blood and animal Spirits to be ſet in Motion by them, which Motion of the Blood and animal Spirits is not of the Eſſence of theſe Affections, in Men on the Earth, but the Effect of them; altho' by their Re-action they may make ſome circumſtantial Difference in the Senſation of the Mind. There is a Senſation of the Mind which loves and rejoices, that is antecedent to any Effects on the Fluids of the Body; and this Senſation of the Mind, therefore don't depend on theſe Motions in the Body, and ſo may be in the Soul without the Body, And wherever there are the Exerciſes of Love and Joy, there is that Senſation of the Mind, whether it be in the Body or out; and that inward Senſation, or kind of ſpiritual Senſe or Feeling, and Motion of the Soul, is what is called Affection: The Soul when it thus feels, (if I may ſo ſay) and is thus moved, is ſaid to be affected, and eſp cially when this inward Senſation and Motion, are to a very high Degree, as they are in the Saints in Heaven.

Heaven. If we can learn any Thing of the State of Heaven from the Scripture, the Love and Joy that the Saints have there, is exceeding great and vigorous; impreſſing the Heart with the ſtrongeſt and moſt lively Senſation of inexpreſſible Sweetneſs, mightily moving, animating, and engaging them, making them like to a Flame of Fire. And if ſuch Love and Joy be not Affections, then the Word *Affection* is of no Uſe in Language.—Will any ſay, that the Saints in Heaven, in beholding the Face of their Father, and the Glory of their Redeemer, and contemplating his wonderful Works, and particularly his laying down his Life for them, have their Hearts nothing moved and affected, by all which they behold or conſider?

Hence therefore the *Religion of Heaven*, conſiſting chiefly in holy Love and Joy, conſiſts very much in Affection: And therefore undoubtedly, *true Religion* conſiſts very much in Affection. The Way to learn the true Nature of any Thing, is to go where that Thing is to be found in its Purity and Perfection. If we would know the Nature of true Gold, we muſt view it, not in the Ore, but when it is refined. If we would learn what true Religion is, we muſt go where there is true Religion, and nothing but true Religion, and in its higheſt Perfection, without any Defect or Mixture. All who are truly religious are not of this World, they are Strangers here, and belong to Heaven; they are born from above, Heaven is their native Country, and the Nature which they receive by this heavenly Birth, is an heavenly Nature, they receive *an Anointing from above*; that Principle of true Religion which is in them, is a Communication of the Religion of Heaven; their Grace is the Dawn of Glory; and God fits them for that World by conforming them to it.

9. This appears from the Nature and Deſign of the Ordinances and Duties, which God hath appointed, as Means and Expreſſions of true Religion.

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To inſtance in the Duty of Prayer: 'Tis manifeſt, we are not appointed, in this Duty, to declare God's Perfections, his Majeſty, Holineſs, Goodneſs, and All-ſufficiency, and our own Meanneſs, Emptineſs, Dependence, and Unworthineſs, and our Wants and Deſires, to inform God of theſe Things, or to incline his Heart, and prevail with him to be willing to ſhew us Mercy; but ſuitably to affect our own Hearts with the Things we expreſs, and ſo to prepare us to receive the Bleſſings we aſk. And ſuch Geſtures, and Manner of external Behaviour in the Worſhip of God, which Cuſtom has made to be Significations of Humility and Reverence, can be of no further Uſe, than as they have ſome Tendency to affect our own Hearts, or the Hearts of others.

And the Duty of ſinging Praiſes to God, ſeems to be appointed wholly to excite and expreſs religious Affections. No other Reaſon can be aſſigned, why we ſhould expreſs ourſelves to God in Verſe, rather than in Proſe, and do it with Muſick, but only, that ſuch is our Nature and Frame, that theſe Things have a Tendency to move our Affections.

The ſame Thing appears in the Nature and Deſign of the Sacraments, which God hath appointed. God, conſidering our Frame, hath not only appointed that we ſhould be told of the great Things of the Goſpel, and of the Redemption of Chriſt, and inſtructed in them by his Word; but alſo that they ſhould be, as it were, exhibited to our View, in ſenſible Repreſentations, in the Sacraments the more to affect us with them.

And the impreſſing divine Things on the Hearts and Affections of Men, is evidently one great and main End for which God has ordained, that his Word delivered in the holy Scriptures, ſhould be opened, applied, and ſet home upon Men, in Preaching. And therefore it don't anſwer the Aim which God had in this Inſtitution, merely for Men to have good Commentaries and Expoſitions on the Scripture, and other good Books of Divinity; becauſe, altho' theſe may tend, as well as

Preaching,

Preaching, to give Men a good doctrinal or ſpeculative Underſtanding of the Things of the Word of God, yet they have not an equal Tendency to impreſs them on Men's Hearts and Affections. God hath appointed a particular, and lively Application of his Word, to Men, in the Preaching of it, as a fit Means to affect Sinners, with the Importance of the Things of Religion, and their own Miſery, and Neceſſity of a Remedy, and the Glory and Sufficiency of a Remedy provided; and to ſtir up the pure Minds of the Saints, and quicken their Affections, by often bringing the great Things of Religion to their Remembrance, and ſetting them before them in their proper Colours, tho' they know them, and have been fully inſtructed in them already; 2 *Pet.* i. 12, 13. And particularly, to promote thoſe two Affections in them, which are ſpoken of in the Text, *Love* and *Joy*: *Chriſt gave ſome Apoſtles, and ſome Prophets, and ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, that the Body of Chriſt might be edified in Love*, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 16. The Apoſtle, in inſtructing and counſelling *Timothy*, concerning the Work of the Miniſtry, informs him that the great End of that Word which a Miniſter is to preach, is *Love* or *Charity*, 1 Tim. i. 3, 4, 5. And another Affection which God has appointed Preaching as a Means to promote in the Saints, is *Joy*; and therefore Miniſters are called *Helpers of their Joy*, 2 Cor. i. 24.

10. 'Tis an Evidence that true Religion, or Holineſs of Heart, lies very much in the Affection of the Heart, that the Scriptures place the Sins of the Heart very much in *Hardneſs of Heart*. Thus the Scriptures do every where. It was Hardneſs of Heart, which excited Grief and Diſpleaſure in Chriſt towards the *Jews*, Mark iii. 5. *He looked round about on them with Anger, being grieved for the Hardneſs of their Hearts.* It is from Men's having ſuch a Heart as this, that they treaſure up Wrath for themſelves. Rom. ii. 5. *After thy Hardneſs*

Hardneſs and impenitent Heart, treaſureſt up unto thyſelf Wrath, againſt the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God. The Reaſon given why the Houſe of *Iſrael* would not obey God, was that they were hard-hearted, Ezek. iii. 7. *But the Houſe of* Iſrael *will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: For all the Houſe of* Iſrael *are impudent and hard-hearted.* The Wickedneſs of that perverſe rebellious Generation in the Wilderneſs, is aſcribed to the Hardneſs of their Hearts; Pſalm xcv. 7,—10. *To Day, if ye will hear my Voice, harden not your Heart, as in the Provocation, and as in the Day of Temptation in the Wilderneſs; when your Fathers tempted me, proved me, and ſaw my Work: Forty Years long was I grieved with this Generation, and ſaid it is a People that do err in their Heart,* &c.—This is ſpoken of as what prevented *Zedekiah's* turning to the Lord, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. *He ſtiffened his Neck, and hardened his Heart, from turning to the Lord God of* Iſrael. This Principle is ſpoken of as that from whence Men are without the Fear of God, and depart from God's Ways: Iſai. lxiii. 17. *O Lord, why haſt thou made us to err from thy Ways, and hardened our Heart from thy Fear?* And Men's rejecting Chriſt, and oppoſing Chriſtianity, is laid to this Principle; Acts xix. 9. *But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but ſpake Evil of that Way before the Multitude:*—God's leaving Men to the Power of the Sin and Corruption of the Heart, is often expreſs'd by God's hardening their Hearts; Rom. ix. 18. *Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* John xii. 40. *He hath blinded their Minds, and hardened their Hearts.* And the Apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak of *an evil Heart, that departs from the living God,* and *a hard Heart* as the ſame Thing, Heb. iii. 8. *Harden not your Heart as in the Provocation,* &c. Verſe xii. 13. *Take heed Brethren, leſt there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called to Day; leſt any of you be hardened through*

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the Deceitfulneſs of Sin. And that great Work of God in Converſion, which conſiſts in delivering a Perſon from the Power of Sin, and mortifying Corruption, is expreſs'd once and again, by God's *taking away the Heart of Stone, and giving an Heart of Fleſh*, Ezek. xi. 19. and Chap. xxxvi. 26.

Now by a hard Heart, is plainly meant an unaffected Heart, or a Heart not eaſy to be moved with vertuous Affections, like a Stone, inſenſible, ſtupid, unmoved and hard to be impreſſed. Hence the hard Heart is called a *ſtony Heart*, and is oppoſed to an *Heart of Fleſh*, that has feeling, and is ſenſibly touch'd and moved. We read in Scripture of a *hard Heart*, and a *tender Heart*: And doubtleſs we are to underſtand theſe, as contrary the one to the other. But what is a tender Heart, but a Heart which is eaſily impreſſed with what ought to affect it? God commends *Joſiah*, becauſe his Heart was tender; and 'tis evident by thoſe Things which are mentioned as Expreſſions and Evidences of this Tenderneſs of Heart, that by his Heart being tender is meant, his Heart being eaſily moved with religious and pious Affection; 2 Kings xxii. 19. *Becauſe thine Heart was tender, and thou haſt humbled thyſelf before the Lord, when thou heardſt what I ſpake againſt this Place, and againſt the Inhabitants thereof, that they ſhould become a Deſolation, and a Curſe, and haſt rent thy Cloaths, and haſt wept before me; I alſo have heard thee, ſaith the Lord.* And this is one Thing, wherein it is neceſſary we ſhould *become as little Children, in order to our entering into the Kingdom of God*, even that we ſhould have our Hearts tender, and eaſily affected and moved in ſpiritual and divine Things, as little Children have in other Things.

'Tis very plain in ſome Places, in the Texts themſelves, that by Hardneſs of Heart is meant a Heart void of Affection. So to ſignify the *Oſtrich*'s being without natural Affection to her Young, it is ſaid, Job. xxxix. 16. *She hardeneth her Heart againſt her young Ones,*

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as though they were not hers. So a Perſon having a Heart unaffected in Time of Danger, is expreſs'd by his hardening his Heart, Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the Man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his Heart ſhall fall into Miſchief.*

Now therefore ſince it is ſo plain, that by a hard Heart, in Scripture, is meant a Heart deſtitute of pious Affections, and ſince alſo the Scriptures do ſo frequently place the Sin and Corruption of the Heart in Hardneſs of Heart; it is evident, that the Grace and Holineſs of the Heart, on the contrary, muſt, in a great Meaſure, conſiſt in its having pious Affections, and being eaſily ſuſceptive of ſuch Affection. Divines are generally agreed, that Sin radically and fundamentally conſiſts in what is negative, or privative, having its Root and Foundation in a Privation or Want of Holineſs. And therefore undoubtedly, if it be ſo that Sin does very much conſiſt in Hardneſs of Heart, and ſo in the Want of pious Affections of Heart, Holineſs does conſiſt very much *in thoſe pious Affections.*

I am far from ſuppoſing that all Affections do ſhew a tender Heart: Hatred, Anger, Vain-glory, and other ſelfiſh and ſelf-exalting Affections, may greatly prevail in the hardeſt Heart. But yet it is evident, that *Hardneſs of Heart*, and *Tenderneſs of Heart*, are Expreſſions that relate to the Affections of the Heart, and denote the Heart's being ſuſceptible of, or ſhut up againſt *certain Affections*, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more afterwards.

Upon the Whole, I think it clearly and abundantly evident, that true Religion lies very much in the Affections. Not that I think theſe Arguments prove, that Religion in the Hearts of the truly Godly, is ever in exact Proportion to the Degree of Affection, and preſent Emotion of the Mind. For undoubtedly, there is much Affection in the true Saints which is not ſpiritual: Their religious Affections are often mixed; all is not from Grace, but much from Nature. And tho' the

Affections

Affections have not their Seat in the Body, yet the Constitution of the Body, may very much contribute to the preſent Emotion of the Mind. And the Degree of Religion is rather to be judged of by the Fixedneſs and Strength of the Habit that is exerciſed in Affection, whereby holy Affection is habitual, than by the Degree of the preſent Exerciſe: And the Strength of that Habit is not always in Proportion to outward Effects and Manifeſtations, or inward Effects, in the Hurry and Vehemence, and ſudden Changes of the Courſe of the Thoughts of the Mind. But yet it is evident, that Religion conſiſts ſo much in Affection, as that without holy Affection there is no true Religion: And no Light in the Underſtanding is good, which don't produce holy Affection in the Heart; no Habit or Principle in the Heart is good, which has no ſuch Exerciſe; and no external Fruit is good, which don't proceed from ſuch Exerciſes.

Having thus conſidered the Evidence of the Propoſition laid down, I proceed to ſome Inferences.

1. We may hence learn how great their Error is, who are for diſcarding all religious Affections, as having nothing ſolid or ſubſtantial in them.

There ſeems to be too much of a Diſpoſition this Way, prevailing in this Land at this Time. Becauſe many who, in the late extraordinary Seaſon, appeared to have great religious Affections, did not manifeſt a right Temper of Mind, and run into many Errors, in the Time of their Affection, and the Heat of their Zeal; and becauſe the high Affections of many ſeem to be ſo ſoon come to nothing, and ſome who ſeemed to be mightily raiſed and ſwallowed with Joy and Zeal, for a While, ſeem to have returned like the Dog to his Vomit: Hence religious Affections in general are grown out of Credit, with great Numbers, as tho' true Religion did not at all conſiſt in them. Thus we eaſily and

naturally

naturally run from one Extreme to another. A little while ago we were in the other Extreme; there was a prevalent Diſpoſition to look upon all high religious Affections, as eminent Exerciſes of true Grace, without much inquiring into the Nature and Source of thoſe Affections, and the Manner in which they aroſe: If Perſons did but appear to be indeed very much moved and raiſed, ſo as to be full of religious Talk, and expreſs themſelves with great Warmth and Earneſtneſs, and to be *fill'd*, or to be *very full*, as the Phraſes were; it was too much the Manner, without further Examination, to conclude ſuch Perſons were full of the Spirit of God, and had eminent Experience of his gracious Influences. This was the Extreme which was prevailing three or four Years ago. But of late, inſtead of *eſteeming* and *admiring* all religious *Affections*, *without Diſtinction*, it is a Thing much more prevalent, to *reject* and *diſcard* all *without Diſtinction*. Herein appears the Subtilty of *Satan*. While he ſaw that *Affections* were much in Vogue, knowing the greater Part of the Land were not verſed in ſuch Things, and had not had much Experience of great *religious Affections*, to enable them to judge well of them, and diſtinguiſh between true and falſe; then he knew he could beſt play his Game, by ſowing Tares amongſt the Wheat, and mingling *falſe Affections* with the Works of God's Spirit: He knew this to be a likely Way, to delude and eternally ruin many Souls, and greatly to wound Religion in the Saints, and entangle them in a dreadful Wilderneſs, and by and by, to bring all Religion into Diſrepute. But now, when the ill Conſequences of theſe *falſe Affections* appear, and 'tis become very apparent, that ſome of thoſe Emotions which made a glaring Shew, and were by many greatly admired, were in Reality Nothing; the Devil ſees it to be for his Intereſt to go another Way to work, and to endeavour to his utmoſt to propagate and eſtabliſh a Perſwaſion, that all Affections and ſenſible Emotions of the Mind, in Things of Religion,

are

re nothing at all to be regarded, but are rather to be voided, and carefully guarded againſt, as Things of pernicious Tendency. This he knows is the Way to bring all Religion to a meer lifeleſs Formality, and effectually ſhut out the Power of Godlineſs, and every Thing which is ſpiritual, and to have all true Chriſtianity turn'd out of Doors. For altho' to true Religion, there muſt indeed be ſomething elſe beſides Affection; yet true Religion conſiſts ſo much in the Affections, that there can be no true Religion without them. He who has no religious Affection, is in a State of ſpiritual Death, and is wholly deſtitute of the powerful, quickening, ſaving Influences of the Spirit of God upon his Heart. As there is no true Religion, where there is nothing elſe but Affection; ſo there is no true Religion where there is no *religious Affection.* As on the one Hand, there muſt be Light in the Underſtanding, as well as an *affected* fervent Heart, where there is Heat without Light, there can be nothing divine or heavenly in that Heart; ſo on the other Hand, where there is a Kind of Light without Heat, a Head ſtored with Notions and Speculations, with a cold and unaffected Heart, there can be nothing divine in that Light, that Knowledge is no true ſpiritual Knowledge of divine Things. If the great Things of Religion are rightly underſtood, they will affect the Heart. The Reaſon why Men are not affected by ſuch infinitely great, important, glorious, and wonderful Things, as they often hear and read of, in the Word of God, is undoubtedly becauſe they are blind; if they were not ſo, it would be impoſſible, and utterly inconſiſtent with human Nature, that their Hearts ſhould be otherwiſe, than ſtrongly impreſs'd, and greatly moved by ſuch Things.

This Manner of ſlighting all religious *Affections*, is the Way exceedingly to harden the Hearts of Men, and to encourage them in their Stupidity and Senſeleſsneſs, and to keep them in a State of ſpiritual Death as long as they live, and bring them at laſt to Death eternal.

nal. The prevailing Prejudice againſt *religious Affections* at this Day, in the Land, is apparently of awful Effect, to harden the Hearts of Sinners, and damp the Graces of many of the Saints, and ſtund the Life and Power of Religion, and preclude the Effect of Ordinances, and hold us down in a State of Dulneſs and Apathy, and undoubtedly cauſes many Perſons greatly to offend God, in entertaining mean and low Thoughts of the extraordinary Work he has lately wrought in this Land.

And for Perſons to deſpiſe and cry down all religious *Affections*, is the Way to ſhut all Religion out of their own Hearts, and to make thorough Work in ruining their Souls.

They who condemn high Affections in others, are certainly not likely to have high Affections themſelves. And let it be conſidered, that they who have but little religious Affection, have certainly but little Religion. And they who condemn others for their *religious Affections*, and have none themſelves, have no Religion.

There are falſe *Affections*, and there are true. A Man's having *much Affection*, don't prove that he has any true Religion: But if he has *no Affection*, it proves that he has no true Religion. The right Way, is not to reject all Affections, nor to approve all; but to diſtinguiſh between Affections, approving ſome, and rejecting others; ſeparating between the Wheat and the Chaff, the Gold and the Droſs, the Precious and the Vile.

2. If it be ſo, that true Religion lies much in the *Affections*, hence we may infer, that ſuch Means are to be deſired, as have much of a Tendency to move the Affections. Such Books, and ſuch a Way of Preaching the Word, and Adminiſtration of Ordinances, and ſuch a Way of worſhipping God in Prayer, and ſinging Praiſes, is much to be deſired, as has a Tendency deeply to affect the Hearts of thoſe who attend theſe Means.

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Such a Kind of Means, would formerly have been highly approved of and applauded by the Generality of the People of the Land, as the moſt excellent and profitable, and having the greateſt Tendency to promote the Ends of the Means of Grace. But the prevailing Taſte ſeems of late ſtrangely to be alter'd: That pathetical Manner of Praying and Preaching, which would formerly have been admir'd and extoll'd, and that for this Reaſon, becauſe it had ſuch a Tendency to move the Affections, now, in great Multitudes, immediately excites Diſguſt, and moves no other Affections, than thoſe of Diſpleaſure and Contempt.

Perhaps, formerly the Generality (at leaſt of the common People) were in the Extreme, of looking too much to an affectionate Addreſs, in publick Performances: But now, a very great Part of the People, ſeem to have gone far into a contrary Extreme. Indeed there may be ſuch Means, as may have a great Tendency to ſtir up the Paſſions of weak and ignorant Perſons, and yet have no great Tendency to Benefit their Souls. For tho' they may have a Tendency to excite Affections, they may have little or none to excite gracious Affections, or any Affections tending to Grace. But undoubtedly, if the Things of Religion, in the Means uſed, are treated according to their Nature, and exhibited truly, ſo as tends to convey juſt Apprehenſions, and a right Judgment of them; the more they have a Tendency to move the Affections the better.

3. If true Religion lies much in the Affections, hence we may learn, what great Cauſe we have to be aſhamed and confounded before God, that we are no more affected with the great Things of Religion. It appears from what has been ſaid, that this ariſes from our having ſo little true Religion.

God has given to Mankind Affections, for the ſame Purpoſe which he has given all the Faculties and Principles of the human Soul, for, *viz.* that they might be

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ſubſervient to Man's chief End, and the great Buſineſs for which God has created him, that is the Buſineſs of Religion. And yet how common is it among Mankind, that their Affections are much more exerciſed and engaged in other Matters, than in Religion! In Things which concern Men's worldly Intereſt, their outward Delights, their Honour and Reputation, and their natural Relations, they have their Deſires eager, their Appetites vehement, their Love warm and affectionate, their Zeal ardent; in theſe Things their Hearts are tender and ſenſible, eaſily moved, deeply impreſs'd, much concerned, very ſenſibly affected, and greatly engaged; much depreſs'd with Grief at worldly Loſſes, and highly raiſed with Joy at worldly Succeſſes and Proſperity. But how inſenſible and unmov'd are moſt Men, about the great Things of another World! How dull are their Affections! How heavy and hard their Hearts in theſe Matters! Here their Love is cold, their Deſires languid, their Zeal low, and their Gratitude ſmall. How they can ſit and hear of the infinite Height and Depth, and Length and Breadth of the Love of God in Chriſt Jeſus, of his giving his infinitely dear Son, to be offered up a Sacrifice for the Sins of Men, and of the unparallel'd Love of the innocent, holy and tender Lamb of God, manifeſted in his dying Agonies, his bloody Sweat, his loud and bitter Cries, and bleeding Heart, and all this for Enemies, to redeem them from deſerved, eternal Burnings, and to bring to unſpeakable and everlaſting Joy and Glory; and yet be cold, and heavy, inſenſible, and regardleſs! Where are the Exerciſes of our Affections proper, if not here? What is it that does more require them? And what can be a fit Occaſion of their lively and vigorous Exerciſe, if not ſuch an one as this? Can any Thing be ſet in our View, greater and more important? Any Thing more wonderful and ſurpriſing? Or more nearly concerning our Intereſt? Can we ſuppoſe the wiſe Creator implanted ſuch Principles in the human Nature as the Affections, to be of

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Uſe to us, and to be exerciſed on certain proper Occaſions, but to lie ſtill on ſuch an Occaſion as this? Can any Chriſtian, who believes the Truth of theſe Things, entertain ſuch Thoughts?

If we ought ever to exerciſe our Affections at all, and if the Creator has not unwiſely conſtituted the human Nature, in making theſe Principles a Part of it, when they are vain and uſeleſs; then they ought to be exerciſed about thoſe Objects which are moſt worthy of them. But is there any Thing, which Chriſtians can find in Heaven or Earth, ſo worthy to be the Objects of their Admiration and Love, their earneſt and longing Deſires, their Hope, and their Rejoicing, and their fervent Zeal, as thoſe Things that are held forth to us, in the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt? In which not only are Things declared moſt worthy to affect us, but they are exhibited in the moſt affecting Manner. The Glory and Beauty of the bleſſed Jehovah, which is moſt worthy in itſelf, to be the Object of our Admiration and Love, is there exhibited in the moſt affecting Manner that can be conceived of, as it appears ſhining in all its Luſtre, in the Face of an incarnate, infinitely loving, meek, compaſſionate, dying Redeemer. All the Vertues of the Lamb of God, his Humility, Patience, Meekneſs, Submiſſion, Obedience, Love and Compaſſion, are exhibited to our View, in a Manner the moſt tending to move our Affections, of any that can be imagined; as they all had their greateſt Trial, and their higheſt Exerciſe, and ſo their brighteſt Manifeſtation, when he was in the moſt affecting Circumſtances; even when he was under his laſt Sufferings, thoſe unutterable and unparallel'd Sufferings he endured, from his tender Love and Pity to us. There alſo, the hateful Nature of our Sins is manifeſted in the moſt affecting Manner poſſible; as we ſee the dreadful Effects of them, in what our Redeemer, who undertook to anſwer for us, ſuffered for them. And there we have the moſt affecting Manifeſtations of God's Hatred of Sin, and his Wrath and

Juſtice in puniſhing it; as we ſee his Juſtice in the Strictneſs and Inflexibleneſs of it, and his Wrath in its Terribleneſs, in ſo dreadfully puniſhing our Sins, in One who was infinitely dear to him, and loving to us. So has God diſpoſed Things, in the Affair of our Redemption, and in his glorious Diſpenſations, revealed to us in the Goſpel, as tho' every Thing were purpoſely contrived in ſuch a Manner, as to have the greateſt, poſſible Tendency to reach our Hearts in the moſt tender Part, and move our Affections moſt ſenſily and ſtrongly. How great Cauſe have we therefore to be humbled to the Duſt, that we are no more affected!

PART

PART II.

Shewing what are no certain Signs that religious Affections are truly gracious, or that they are not.

IF any one, on the Reading of what has been juſt now ſaid, is ready to acquit himſelf, and ſay, "I am not "one of thoſe who have no religious "Affections; I am often greatly moved "with the Conſideration of the Things "of Religion:" Let him not content himſelf with this, that he has religious Affections. For (as was obſerved before) as we ought not to reject and condemn all Affections, as tho' true Religion did not at all conſiſt in Affection; ſo on the other Hand, we ought not to approve of all, as tho' every one that was religiouſly affected, had true Grace, and was therein the Subject of the ſaving Influences of the Spirit of God; and that therefore the right Way is to diſtinguiſh among religious Affections, between one ſort and another. Therefore let us now endeavour to do this: And in order to it, I would do two Things.

I. I would mention ſome Things, which are no Signs one Way or the other, either that Affections are ſuch as true Religion conſiſts in, or that they are otherwiſe; that we may be guarded againſt judging of Affections by falſe Signs.

II. I would obſerve ſome Things, wherein thoſe Affections which are ſpiritual and gracious, differ from thoſe which are not ſo, and may be diſtinguiſhed and known.

FIRST, I would take Notice of ſome Things, which are no Signs that Affections are gracious, or that they are not.

I. 'Tis no Sign one Way or the other, that religious Affections are very great, or raiſed very high.

Some are ready to condemn all high Affections: If Perſons appear to have their religious Affections rais'd to an extraordinary Pitch, they are prejudiced againſt them, and determine that they are Deluſions, without further Enquiry. But if it be, as has been proved, that true Religion lies very much in religious Affections; then it follows, that if there be a great deal of true Religion, there will be great religious Affections; if true Religion in the Hearts of Men, be raiſed to a great Height, divine and holy Affections will be raiſed to a great Height.

Love is an Affection; but will any Chriſtian ſay, Men ought not to love God and Jeſus Chriſt in a high Degree? And will any ſay, we ought not to have a very great Hatred of Sin, and a very deep Sorrow for it? Or that we ought not to exerciſe a high Degree of Gratitude to God, for the Mercies we receive of him, and the great Things he has done for the Salvation of fallen Men? Or that we ſhould not have very great and ſtrong Deſires after God and Holineſs? Is there any who will profeſs, that his Affections in Religion are great enough; and will

will say, "I have no Cause to be humbled, that I am "no more affected with the Things of Religion than I "am, I have no Reason to be ashamed, that I have no "greater Exercises of Love to God, and Sorrow for "Sin, and Gratitude for the Mercies which I have "received?" Who is there that will go and bless God, that he is affected enough with what he has read and heard, of the wonderful Love of God to Worms and Rebels, in giving his only begotten Son to die for them, and of the dying Love of Christ; and will pray that he may not be affected with them in any higher Degree, because high Affections are improper, and very unlovely in Christians, being enthusiastical, and ruinous to true Religion?

Our Text plainly speaks of great and high Affections, when it speaks of *rejoicing with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory:* Here the most superlative Expressions are used, which Language will afford. And the Scriptures often require us to exercise very high Affections: Thus in the first and great Commandment of the Law, there is an Accumulation of Expressions, as tho' Words were wanting to express the Degree, in which we ought to love God; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength.* So the Saints are called upon to exercise high Degrees of Joy: *Rejoice*, says Christ to his Disciples, *and be exceeding glad*, Matth. v. 12. So it is said, Psal. lxviii. 3. *Let the Righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.* So in the same Book of Psams, the Saints are often called upon *to shout for Joy*; and in *Luke* vi. 23, *to leap for Joy.* So they are abundantly called upon to exercise high Degrees of Gratitude for Mercies, to *Praise God with all their Hearts, with Hearts lifted up in the Ways of the Lord, and their Souls magnifying the Lord, singing his Praises, talking of his wondrous Works, declaring his Doings*, &c.

And

And we find the moſt eminent Saints in Scripture, often profeſſing high Affections. Thus the Pſalmiſt *ſpeaks* of his Love, as if it were *unſpeakable*; Pſalm cxix. 97. *O how love I thy Law!* So he expreſſes a great Degree of Hatred of Sin; Pſalm cxxxix. 21, 22. *Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am I not grieved with them that riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with perfect Hatred.* He alſo expreſſes a high Degree of Sorrow for Sin: He ſpeaks of his Sins *going over his Head, as an heavy Burden, that was too heavy for him*; and of *his roaring all the Day*, and *his Moiſture's being turned into the Drought of Summer*, and *his Bones being* as it were *broken* with Sorrow. So he often expreſſes great Degrees of Spiritual Deſires, in a Multitude of the ſtrongeſt Expreſſions which can be conceived of; ſuch as *his Longing, his Soul's thirſting as a dry and thirſty Land where no Water is, his panting, his Fleſh and Heart crying out, his Soul's breaking for the Longing it hath*, &c. He expreſſes the Exerciſes of great and extreme Grief for the Sins of others, Pſal. cxix. 136. *Rivers of Water run down mine Eyes, becauſe they keep not thy Law.* And Verſe 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, becauſe of the Wicked that forſake thy Law.* He expreſſes high Exerciſes of Joy, Pſal. xxi. 1. *The King ſhall joy in thy Strength; and in thy Salvation, how greatly ſhall he rejoice!* Pſal. lxxii. 23. *My Lips ſhall greatly rejoice, when I ſing unto thee.* Pſal. lxxiii. 3, ——7. *Becauſe thy loving Kindneſs is better than Life, my Lips ſhall praiſe thee. Thus will I bleſs thee, while I live: I will lift up my Hands in thy Name: My Soul ſhall be ſatisfied as with Marrow and Fatneſs, and my Mouth ſhall praiſe thee with joyful Lips: When I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night Watches; becauſe thou haſt been my Help, therefore in the Shadow of thy Wings will I rejoice.*

The Apoſtle *Paul* expreſſes high Exerciſes of Affection. Thus he expreſſes the Exerciſes of Pity and Concern for others Good, even to *Anguiſh of Heart*; a *great, fervent*, and *abundant Love*, and *earneſt* and *long-*

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ing Desires, and *exceeding Joy*; and speaks of the *Exultation* and *Triumphs* of his Soul, and his *earnest Expectation* and *Hope*, and his *abundant Tears*, and the *Travails of his Soul*, in Pity, Grief, earnest Desires, godly Jealousy, and fervent Zeal, in many Places that have been cited already, and which therefore I need not repeat. *John the Baptist* expressed *great Joy*, John iii. 39. Those blessed *Women* that anointed the Body of Jesus, are represented as in a very high Exercise of religious Affection, on occasion of Christ's Resurrection; Matth. xxviii. 8. *And they departed from the Sepulchre, with Fear and great Joy.*

'Tis often foretold of the Church of God, in her future happy Seasons here on Earth, that they shall exceedingly rejoice; Psal. lxxxix. 15, 16. *They shall walk, O Lord, in the Light of thy Countenance: In thy Name shall they rejoice all the Day, and in thy Righteousness shall they be exalted.* Zech. ix. 9. *Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of* Zion; *shout, O Daughter of* Jerusalem; *Behold thy King cometh*, &c. The same is represented in innumerable other Places. And because high Degrees of Joy are the proper and genuine Fruits of the Gospel of Christ, therefore the Angel calls this Gospel, *good Tidings of great Joy, that should be to all People.*

The Saints and Angels in Heaven, that have Religion in it's highest Perfection, are exceedingly affected with what they behold and contemplate, of God's Perfections and Works. They are all as a pure heavenly Flame of Fire, in their Love, and in the Greatness and Strength of their Joy and Gratitude: Their Praises are represented, *as the Voice of many Waters, and as the Voice of a great Thunder.* Now the only Reason why their Affections are so much higher than the holy Affections of Saints on Earth, is, they see the Things they are affected by, more according to their Truth, and have their Affections more conformed to the Nature of Things. And therefore, if religious Affections in Men here below, are but of the same Nature and Kind with

their's,

their's, the higher they are, and the nearer they are to their's in Degree, the better; becauſe therein they will be ſo much the more conformed to Truth, as their's are.

From theſe Things it certainly appears, that religious Affections being in a very high Degree, is no Evidence that they are not ſuch as have the Nature of true Religion. Therefore they do greatly err, who condemn Perſons as Enthuſiaſts, merely becauſe their Affections are very high.

And on the other Hand, 'Tis no Evidence that religious Affections are of a ſpiritual and gracious Nature, becauſe they are great. 'Tis very manifeſt by the holy Scripture, our ſure and infallible Rule to judge of Things of this Nature, that there are religious Affections which are very high, that are not ſpiritual and ſaving. The Apoſtle *Paul* ſpeaks of Affections in the *Galatians*, which had been exceedingly elevated, and which yet he manifeſtly ſpeaks of, as fearing that they were vain, and had come to nothing, Gal. 4. 15. *Where is the Bleſſedneſs you ſpake of? For I bear you Record, that if it had been poſſible, you would have plucked out your own Eyes, and have given them to me.* And in the 11th Verſe he tells them, *He was afraid of them, leſt he had beſtowed on them Labour in vain.* So the Children of *Iſrael* were greatly affected with God's Mercy to them, when they had ſeen how wonderfully he wrought for them at the Red Sea, where they *ſang God's Praiſe*; tho' they ſoon forgot his Works. So they were greatly affected again at Mount *Sinai*, when they ſaw the marvelous Manifeſtations God made of himſelf there; and ſeemed mightily engaged in their Minds, and with great Forwardneſs made Anſwer, when God propoſed his holy Covenant to them, ſaying, *All that the Lord hath ſpoken will we do, and be obedient.* But how ſoon was there an End to all this mighty Forwardneſs and Engagedneſs of Affection? How quickly were they turned aſide after other Gods, rejoicing and ſhouting around their golden Calf? So great Multitudes who were affected with the

Miracle

Miracle of raising *Lazarus* from the Dead, were elevated to a high Degree, and made a mighty ado, when Jesus presently after enter'd into *Jerusalem*, exceedingly magnifying Christ, as tho' the Ground were not good enough for the Ass he rode to tread upon; and therefore cut down Branches of Palm-trees, and strewed them in the Way; yea, pull'd off their Garments, and spread them in the Way; and cried with loud Voices, *Hosanna to the Son of* David, *blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord, Hosanna in the Highest*; so as to make the whole City ring again, and put all into an Uproar. We learn by the Evangelist *John*, that the Reason why the People made this ado, was because they were affected with the Miracle of raising *Lazarus*: *John* xii. 18. Here was a vast Multitude crying *Hosanna* on this Occasion, so that it gave Occasion to the Pharisees to say, *Behold the World is gone after him*, John xii. 19. but Christ had at that Time but few true Disciples. And how quickly was this ado at an End? All of this Nature is quell'd and dead, when this *Jesus* stands bound, with a mock Robe and a Crown of Thorns, to be derided, spit upon, scourg'd, condemn'd and executed. Indeed there was a great and loud Out-cry concerning him, among the Multitude then, as well as before; but of a very different Kind: 'Tis not then, *Hosanna*, *Hosanna*, but *Crucify*, *Crucify*.

And it is the concurring Voice of all orthodox Divines, that there may be religious Affections, which are raised to a very high Degree, and yet there be nothing of true Religion.†

II. 'Tis no Sign that Affections have the Nature of true Religion, or that they have not, that they have great Effects on the Body.

All Affections whatsoever, have in some Respect or Degree, an Effect on the Body. As was observed before,

† *Mr.* Stoddard *observes, That common Affections are sometimes stronger than saving.* Guide to Christ. p. 21.

fore; such is our Nature, and such are the Laws of Union of Soul and Body, that the Mind can have no lively or vigorous Exercise, without some Effect upon the Body. So subject is the Body to the Mind, and so much do its Fluids, especially the animal Spirits, attend the Motions and Exercises of the Mind, that there can't be so much as an intense Thought, without an Effect upon them. Yea, 'tis questionable, whether an embodied Soul ever so much as thinks one Thought, or has any Exercise at all, but that there is some corresponding Motion or Alteration of Motion, in some Degree, of the Fluids, in some Part of the Body. But universal Experience shews, that the Exercise of the Affections, have in a special Manner a Tendency, to some sensible Effect upon the Body. And if this be so, that all Affections have some Effect on the Body, we may then well suppose, the greater those Affections be, and the more vigorous their Exercise (other Circumstances being equal) the greater will be the Effect on the Body. Hence it is not to be wondered at, that very *great* and strong Exercises of the Affections, should have *great* Effects on the Body. And therefore, seeing there are very great Affections, both common and spiritual; hence it is not to be wondered at, that great Effects on the Body, should arise from both these Kinds of Affections. And consequently these Effects are no Signs, that the Affections they arise from, are of one Kind or the other.

Great Effects on the Body certainly are no sure Evidences that Affections are spiritual; for we see that such Effects oftentimes arise from great Affections about temporal Things, and when Religion is no Way concerned in them. And if great Affections about secular Things, that are purely natural, may have these Effects, I know not by what Rule we should determine, that high Affections about religious Things, which arise in like Manner from Nature, can't have the like Effect.

Nor on the other Hand, do I know of any Rule any have to determine, that gracious and holy Affections, when raiſed as high as any natural Affections, and have equally ſtrong and vigorous Exerciſes, can't have a great Effect on the Body. No ſuch Rule can be drawn from Reaſon: I know of no Reaſon, why a being affected with a View of God's Glory ſhould not cauſe the Body to faint, as well as a being affected with a View of *Solomon*'s Glory. And no ſuch Rule has as yet been produced from the Scripture: None has ever been found in all the late Controverſies which have been about Things of this Nature. There is a great Power in ſpiritual Affections; we read of the Power which worketh in Chriſtians, * and of the Spirit of God being in them, as the Spirit of Power, † and of the effectual working of his Power in them; ‡ yea of the working of God's mighty Power in them. ‖ But Man's Nature is weak: Fleſh and Blood are repreſented in Scripture as exceeding weak; and particularly with Reſpect to it's Unfitneſs for great ſpiritual and heavenly Operations and Exerciſes, *Matth.* xxvi. 41. 1 *Cor.* xv. 43, & 50. The Text we are upon ſpeaks of *Joy unſpeakable, and full of Glory.* And who that conſiders what Man's Nature is, and what the Nature of the Affections are, can reaſonably doubt, but that ſuch unutterable and glorious Joys may be too great and mighty for weak Duſt and Aſhes, ſo as to be conſiderably overbearing to it? It is evident by the Scripture, that true divine Diſcoveries, or Ideas of God's Glory, when given in a great Degree, have a Tendency, by affecting the Mind, to overbear the Body; becauſe the Scripture teaches us often, that if theſe Ideas or Views ſhould be given to ſuch a Degree, as they are given in Heaven, the weak Frame of the Body could not ſubſiſt under it, and that no Man can, in that Manner, ſee God and live. The Knowledge which the Saints have of God's Beauty and Glory in this World, and thoſe holy Affections that ariſe from it,

* Eph. iii. 7. † 2 Tim. i. 7. ‡ Ibid. v. 7. Ibid. v. 19. ‖ Eph. i. 19.

it, are of the same Nature and Kind with what the Saints are the Subjects of in Heaven, differing only in Degree and Circumstances: What God gives them here, is a Foretaste of heavenly Happiness, and an Earnest of their future Inheritance. And who shall limit God in his giving this Earnest, or say he shall give so much of the Inheritance, such a Part of the future Reward, as an Earnest of the Whole, and no more? And seeing God has taught us in his Word, that the whole Reward is such, that it would at once destroy the Body, is it not too bold a Thing for us, so to set Bounds to the sovereign God, as to say, that in giving the Earnest of this Reward in this World, he shall never give so much of it, as in the least to diminish the Strength of the Body, when God has no where thus limited himself?

The Psalmist speaking of vehement religious Affections he had, speaks of an Effect in his Flesh or Body, besides what was in his Soul, expressly distinguishing one from the other, once and again, Psal. lxxxiv. 2. *My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my* Heart *and my* Flesh *crieth out for the living God.* Here is a plain Distinction between the Heart and the Flesh, as being each affected. So Psal. lxiii. 1. *My* Soul *thirsteth for thee, my* Flesh *longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is.* Here also is an evident designed Distinction between the Soul and the Flesh.

The Prophet *Habakkuk* speaks of his Body's being over-born, by a Sense of the Majesty of God, Hab. iii. 16. *When I heard, my Belly trembled, my Lips quivered at the Voice, Rottenness entered into my Bones, and I trembled in myself.* So the Psalmist speaks expressly of his Flesh trembling, Psal. cxix. 120. *My Flesh trembleth for Fear of thee.*

That such Ideas of God's Glory, as are sometimes given in this World, have a Tendency to overbear the Body, is evident, because the Scripture gives us an Account, that this has sometimes actually been the Ef-

fect

fect of those external Manifestations God has made of himself, to some of the Saints, which were made to that End, *viz.* to give them an Idea of God's Majesty and Glory. Such Instances we have in the Prophet *Daniel*, and the Apostle *John*. *Daniel* giving an Account of an external Representation of the Glory of Christ, says, Dan. x. 8. *And there remained no Strength in me, for my Comeliness was turned into Corruption, and I retained no Strength.* And the Apostle *John* giving an Account of a like Manifestation made to him, says, Rev. i. 17. *And when I saw him, I fell at his Feet as dead.* 'Tis in vain to say here, these were only external Manifestations or Symbols of the Glory of Christ, which these Saints beheld: For though it be true, that they were outward Representations of Christ's Glory, which they beheld with their bodily Eyes; yet the End and Use of these external Symbols or Representations, was to give to these Prophets an Idea of the Thing represented, and that was the true divine Glory and Majesty of Christ, which is his spiritual Glory; they were made Use of only as Significations of this spiritual Glory, and thus undoubtedly they received them, and improved them, and were affected by them. According to the End, for which God intended these outward Signs, they received by them a great and lively Apprehension of the real Glory and Majesty of God's Nature, which they were Signs of; and thus were greatly affected, their Souls swallowed up, and their Bodies overborn. And I think, they are very bold and daring, who will say God cannot, or shall not give the like clear and affecting Ideas and Apprehensions of the same real Glory and Majesty of his Nature, to none of his Saints, without the Intervention of any such external Shadows of it.

Before I leave this Head, I would farther observe, that 'tis plain the Scripture often makes Use of bodily Effects, to express the Strength of holy and spiritual Affection;

Affections; such as *trembling*,* *groaning*,† *being sick*,‡ *crying out*,§ *panting*,‖ and *fainting*.¶ Now if it be supposed, that these are only figurative Expressions, to represent the Degree of Affection; yet I hope all will allow, that they are fit and suitable Figures to represent the high Degree of those spiritual Affections, which the Spirit of God makes Use of them to represent. Which I don't see how they would be, if those spiritual Affections, let them be in never so high a Degree, have no Tendency to any such Things; but that on the contrary, they are the proper Effects, and sad Tokens of false Affections, and the Delusion of the Devil. I can't think, God would commonly make Use of Things which are very alien from spiritual Affections, and are shrewd Marks of the Hand of *Satan*, and smell strong of the bottomless Pit, as beautiful Figures, to represent the high Degree of holy and heavenly Affections.

III. 'Tis no Sign that Affections are truly gracious Affections, or that they are not, that they cause those who have them, to be fluent, fervent and abundant, in talking of the Things of Religion.

There are many Persons, who if they see this in others, are greatly prejudiced against them. Their being so full of Talk, is with them, a sufficient Ground to condemn them, as Pharisees, and ostentatious Hypocrites. On the other Hand, there are many, who if they see this Effect in any, are very ignorantly and imprudently forward, at once to determine that they are the true Children of God, and are under the saving Influences of his Spirit, and speak of it as a great Evidence of a new Creature: They say *such an one's Mouth is now open'd: He used to be slow to speak; but now he is full and free: He is free now to open his Heart, and tell his Experiences, and declare the Praises of God; it comes from*

* Psal. cxix. 120. Ezra ix. 4. Isa. lxvi. 2, 5. Hab. iii. 16. †Rom. viii. 26. ‡ Cant. ii. 5. and v. 8. § Psal. lxxxiv. 2. ‖ Psal xxxviii. 10. and xlii. 1. and cxix. 131. ¶ Psal. lxxxiv. 2. and cxix. 81.

from him, as free as Water from a Fountain, and the like. And especially are they captivated into a confident and undoubted Perswasion that they are savingly wrought upon, if they are not only free and abundant, but very affectionate and earnest in their Talk.

But this is the Fruit of but little Judgment, a scanty and short Experience; as Events do abundantly shew; and is a Mistake Persons often can run into, through their trusting to their own Wisdom and Discerning, and making their own Notions their Rule, instead of the holy Scripture. Tho' the Scripture be full of Rules, both how we should judge of our own State, and also how we should be conducted in our Opinion of others; yet we have no where any Rule, by which to judge ourselves or others to be in a good Estate, from any such Effect: For this is but the Religion of the Mouth and of the Tongue, and what is in the Scripture represented by the Leaves of a Tree, which tho' the Tree ought not to be without them, yet are no where given as an Evidence of the Goodness of the Tree.

That Persons are disposed to be abundant in talking of Things of Religion, may be from a good Cause, and it may be from a bad one. It may be because their Hearts are very full of holy Affections; *for out of the Abundance of the Heart, the Mouth speaketh:* And it may be because Persons Hearts are very full of religious Affection which is not holy; for still out of the Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh. It is very much the Nature of the Affections, of whatever Kind they be, and whatever Objects they are exercised about, if they are strong, to dispose Persons to be very much in speaking of that which they are affected with; and not only to speak much, but to speak very earnestly and fervently. And therefore Persons talking abundantly and very fervently about the Things of Religion, can be an Evidence of no more than this, that they are very much affected with the Things of Religion; but this may be, (as has been already shewn) and there be no

Grace.

Grace. That which Men are greatly affected with, while the high Affection lasts, they will be earnestly engaged about, and will be likely to shew that Earnestness in their Talk and Behaviour; as the greater Part of the *Jews*, in all *Judea* and *Galilee*, did for a while, about *John the Baptist*'s Preaching and Baptism, when they were willing for a Season to rejoice in his Light: A mighty ado was made all over the Land, and among all Sorts of Persons, about this great Prophet and his Ministry. And so the Multitude in like Manner, often manifested a great Earnestness, and mighty Engagedness of Spirit, in every Thing that was external, about Christ and his Preaching and Miracles, *being astonished at his Doctrine, anon with Joy receiving the Word*, following him, sometimes Night and Day, leaving Meat, Drink and Sleep to hear him; once following him into the Wilderness, fasting three Days going, to hear him; sometimes crying him up to the Clouds, saying, *Never Man spake like this Man!* being fervent and earnest in what they said. But what did these Things come to, in the greater Part of them?

A Person may be over-full of Talk, of his own Experiences; commonly falling upon it every where, and in all Companies; and when it is so, it is rather a dark Sign than a good One. As a Tree that is over-full of Leaves, seldom bears much Fruit: And as a Cloud, tho' to Appearance very pregnant and full of Water, if it brings with it over much Wind, seldom affords much Rain to the dry and thirsty Earth: Which very Thing the holy Spirit is pleased several Times to make Use of, to represent a great Shew of Religion with the Mouth, without answerable Fruit in the Life: Prov. xxv. 14. *Who so boasteth himself of a false Gift, is like Clouds and Wind without Rain.* And the Apostle *Jude*, speaking of some in the primitive Times, that *crept in unawares* among the Saints, and having a great Shew of Religion, were for a While not suspected, *These are Clouds* (says he) *without Water, carried about of Winds,*

Jude

Jude v. 4 and 12. And the Apostle *Peter*, speaking of the same, says, 2 Pet. ii. 17. *These are Clouds without Water, carried with a Tempest.*

False Affections, if they are equally strong, are much more forward to declare themselves, than true. Because 'tis the Nature of false Religion, to affect Shew and Observation; as it was with the Pharisees.*

IV. 'Tis no Sign that Affections are gracious, or that they are otherwise, that Persons did not make 'em themselves, or excite them of their of their own Contrivance, and by their own Strength.

There are many in these Days, that condemn all Affections which are excited in a Way that the Subjects of of them can give no Account of, as not seeming to be the Fruit of any of their own Endeavours, or the natural Consequence of the Faculties and Principles of human Nature, in such Circumstances, and under such Means; but to be from the Influence of some extrinsick and

* That famous experimental Divine Mr. *Shephard*, says, "A "Pharisee's Trumpet shall be heard to the Town's End; when Sim- "plicity walks thro' the Town unseen. Hence a Man will sometimes "covertly commend himself (and *myself* ever comes in) and tells you "a long Story of Conversion: And an hundred to one if some Lie "or other slip not out with it. Why the secret meaning is, *I pray* "*admire me.* Hence complain of Wants and Weaknesses; *pray* "*think what a broken-hearted Christian I am.*" Parab. of the ten Virgins, Part I. Page 179, 180.

And holy Mr. *Flavel* says thus, "O Reader, if thy Heart were "right with God, and thou didst not cheat thyself with a vain Pro- "fession, thou woul'st have frequent Business with God, which thou "would'st be loth thy dearest Friend, or the Wife of thy Bosom, "should be privy to. *Non est Religio, ubi omnia patent.* Religion "doth not lie open to all, to the Eyes of Men. Observed Duties "maintain our Credit; but secret Duties maintain our Life. It was "the saying of a Heathen, about his secret Correspondency with his "Friend, *What need the World be acquainted with it? Thou and I* "*are Theatre enough to each other.* There are enclosed Pleasures in "Religion, which none but renewed spiritual Souls do feelingly "understand." *Flavel*'s Touch-stone of Sincerity, Chap. II. Sect. 2.

and ſupernatural Power upon their Minds. How greatly has the Doctrine of the inward Experience or ſenſible Perceiving of the immediate Power and Operation of the Spirit of God, been reproach'd and ridicul'd by many of late. They ſay the Manner of the Spirit of God, is to co-operate in a ſilent, ſecret and undiſcernable Way, with the Uſe of Means, and our own Endeavours; ſo that there is no diſtinguiſhing by Senſe, between the Influences of the Spirit of God, and the natural Operations of the Faculties of our own Minds.

And it is true, that for any to expect to receive the ſaving Influences of the Spirit of God, while they neglect a diligent Improvement of the appointed Means of Grace, is unreaſonable Preſumption. And to expect that the Spirit of God will ſavingly operate upon their Minds, without the Spirits making Uſe of Means, as ſubſervient to the Effect, is enthuſiaſtical. 'Tis alſo undoubtedly true, that the Spirit of God is very various in the Manner and Circumſtances of his Operations, and that ſometimes he operates in a Way more ſecret and gradual, and from ſmaller Beginnings, than at others.

But if there be indeed a Power, entirely different from and beyond our Power, or the Power of all Means and Inſtruments, and above the Power of Nature, which is requiſite in order to the Production of ſaving Grace in the Heart, according to the general Profeſſion of the Country: Then certainly, it is in no wiſe unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that this Effect ſhould very frequently be produced after ſuch a Manner, as to make it very manifeſt, apparent, and ſenſible that it is ſo. If Grace be indeed owing to the powerful and efficacious Operation of an extrinſick Agent, or divine Efficient out of ourſelves, why is it unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, it ſhould ſeem to be ſo to them who are the Subjects of it? Is it a ſtrange Thing, that it ſhould ſeem to be as it is? When Grace in the Heart, indeed is not produced by our Strength, nor is the Effect of the natural Power of our

own

own Faculties, or any Means or Inſtruments, but is properly the Workmanſhip and Production of the Spirit of the Almighty, is it a ſtrange and unaccountable Thing, that it ſhould ſeem to them who are Subjects of it agreeable to Truth, and not right contrary to Truth; ſo that if Perſons tell of Effects that they are conſcious to in their own Minds, that ſeems to them not to be from the natural Power or Operation of their Minds, but from the ſupernatural Power of ſome other Agent, it ſhould at once be looked upon as a ſure Evidence, of their being under a Deluſion, becauſe Things ſeem to them to be as they are? For this is the Objection which is made: 'Tis look'd upon as a clear Evidence that the Apprehenſions and Affections that many Perſons have, are not really from ſuch a Cauſe, becauſe they ſeem to them to be from that Cauſe: They declare that what they are conſcious of ſeems to them evidently not to be from themſelves, but from the mighty Power of the Spirit of God; and others from hence condemn them, and determine what they experience is not from the Spirit of God, but from themſelves, or from the Devil. Thus unreaſonably are Multitudes treated at this Day, by their Neighbours.

If it be indeed ſo, as the Scripture abundantly teaches, that Grace in the Soul is ſo the Effect of God's Power, that it is fitly compared to thoſe Effects, which are fartheſt from being owing to any Strength in the Subject, ſuch as a *Generation*, or *a being begotten*, and *Reſurrection*, or *a being raiſed from the Dead*, and *Creation*, or *a being brought out of nothing into Being*, and that it is an Effect wherein the mighty Power of God is greatly glorified, and the exceeding Greatneſs of his Power is manifeſted;* then what Account can be given of it, that the Almighty, in ſo great a Work of his Power, ſhould ſo carefully hide his Power, that the Subjects of it ſhould be able to diſcern nothing of it? Or what Reaſon or Revelation

* Eph. i. 17, 18, 19, 20.

have any to determine that he does so? If we may judge by the Scripture, this is not agreeable to God's Manner, in his Operations and Diſpenſations; but on the contrary, 'tis God's Manner, in the great Works of his Power and Mercy, which he works for his People, to order Things ſo, as to make his Hand viſible, and his Power conſpicuous, and Men's Dependance on him moſt evident, that no Fleſh ſhould glory in his Preſence,* that God alone might be exalted,† and that the Excellency of the Power might be of God and not of Man,‡ and that Chriſt's Power might be manifeſted in our Weakneſs,§ and none might ſay, mine own Hand hath ſaved me.‖ So it was in moſt of thoſe temporal Salvations which God wrought for *Iſrael* of old, which were Types of the Salvation of God's People from their ſpiritual Enemies. So it was in the Redemption of *Iſrael*, from their *Egyptian Bondage*; he redeem'd them with a ſtrong Hand, and an outſtretched Arm; and that his Power might be the more conſpicuous, he ſuffer'd *Iſrael* firſt to be brought into the moſt helpleſs and forlorn Circumſtances. So it was in the great Redemption by *Gideon*; God would have his Army diminiſhed to a Handful, and they without any other Arms than Trumpets, and Lamps, and earthen Pitchers. So it was in the Deliverance of *Iſrael* from *Goliath*, by a Stripling, with a Sling and a Stone. So it was in that great Work of God, his calling the *Gentiles*, and converting the heathen World, after Chriſt's Aſcenſion; after that the World by Wiſdom knew not God, and all the Endeavours of Philoſophers had proved in vain, for many Ages, to reform the World, and it was by every Thing, become abundantly evident that the World was utterly helpleſs, by any Thing elſe, but the mighty Power of God. And ſo it was in moſt of the Converſions of particular Perſons, we have an Account of in the Hiſtory

* 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29. † Iſai. ii. 11,——17. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 7. 2 Cor. xii. 9. ‖ Judg. vii. 2.

Hiſtory of the New Teſtament: They were not wrought on in that ſilent, ſecret, gradual and inſenſible Manner, which is now inſiſted on; but with thoſe manifeſt Evidences of a ſupernatural Power, wonderfully and ſuddenly cauſing a great Change, which in theſe Days are looked upon as certain Signs of Deluſion and Enthuſiaſm.

The Apoſtle, in Eph. i. 18, 19, ſpeaks of God's enlightning the Minds of Chriſtians, and ſo bringing them to believe in Chriſt, to the End, that they *might know* the exceeding Greatneſs of his Power to them who believe.

The Words are, *The Eyes of your Underſtanding being enlightned, that ye may know what is the Hope of his Calling, and what the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints, and what is the exceeding Greatneſs of his Power to us-ward, who believe, according to the Working of his mighty Power*, &c. Now when the Apoſtle ſpeaks of their being thus the Subjects of his Power, in their enlightning and effectual Calling, to the End that they might know what his mighty Power was to them who believe, he can mean nothing elſe, than *that they might know by Experience.* But if the Saint know this Power by Experience, then they feel it, and diſcern it, and are conſcious of it; as ſenſibly diſtinguiſhable from the natural Operations of their own Minds, which is not agreeable to a Notion of God's operating ſo ſecretly, and undiſcernably, that it can't be known that they are the Subjects of the Influence of any extrinſick Power at all, any otherwiſe than as they may argue it from Scripture Aſſertions; which is a different Thing from knowing it by Experience.

So that it is very unreaſonable and unſcriptural, to determine that Affections are not from the gracious Operations of God's Spirit, becauſe they are ſenſibly not from the Perſons themſelves, that are the Subjects of them.

On the other Hand, it is no Evidence that Affections are gracious, that they are not purpoſely produced by thoſe who are the Subjects of them, or that they ariſe in their Minds in a Manner they can't account for.

There

There are ſome who make this an Argument in their own Favour, when ſpeaking of what they have experienced, they ſay, "I am ſure I did not make it myſelf: It was a Fruit of no Contrivance or Endeavour of mine; it came when I thought nothing of it; if I might have the World for it, I can't make it again when I pleaſe." And hence they determine, that what they have experienced, muſt be from the mighty Influence of the Spirit of God, and is of a ſaving Nature; but very ignorantly, and without Grounds. What they have been the Subjects of, may indeed, not be from themſelves directly, but may be from the Operation of an inviſible Agent, ſome Spirit beſides their own: But it does not thence follow, that it was from the Spirit of God. There are other Spirits who have Influence on the Minds of Men, beſides the Holy Ghoſt. We are directed not to believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits, whether they be of God. There are many falſe Spirits, exceeding buſy with Men, who often transform themſelves into Angels of Light, and do in many wonderful Ways, with great Subtilty and Power, mimick the Operations of the Spirit of God. And there are many of *Satan*'s Operations, which are very diſtinguiſhable from the voluntary Exerciſes of Men's own Minds. They are ſo, in thoſe dreadful and horrid Suggeſtions, and blaſphemous Injections with which he follows many Perſons; and in vain and fruitleſs Frights and Terrors, which he is the Author of. And the Power of *Satan* may be as immediate, and as evident in falſe Comforts and Joys, as in Terrors and horrid Suggeſtions; and oftentimes is ſo in Fact. 'Tis not in Men's Power to put themſelves into ſuch Raptures, as the *Anabaptiſts* in *Germany*, and many other raving Enthuſiaſts like them, have been the Subjects of.

And beſides, it is to be conſidered, that Perſons may have thoſe Impreſſions on their Minds, which may not be of their own producing, nor from an evil Spirit, but from the Spirit of God, and yet not be from any

ſaving,

ſaving, but a common Influence of the Spirit of God: And the Subjects of ſuch Impreſſions, may be of the Number of thoſe we read of, Heb. vi. 4, 5. *That are once enlightened, and taſte of the heavenly Gift, and are made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and taſte the good Word of God, and the Power of the World to come*; and yet may be wholly unacquainted with thoſe *better Things that accompany Salvation*, ſpoken of ver. 9.

And where neither a good nor evil Spirit have any immediate Hand, Perſons, eſpecially ſuch as are of a weak and vapoury Habit of Body, and the Brain weak, and eaſily ſuſceptive of Impreſſions, may have ſtrange Apprehenſions and Imaginations, and ſtrong Affections attending them, unaccountably ariſing, which are not voluntarily produced by themſelves. We ſee that ſuch Perſons are liable to ſuch Impreſſions, about temporal Things; and there is equal Reaſon, why they ſhould about ſpiritual Things. As a Perſon who is aſleep, has Dreams, that he is not the voluntary Author of; ſo may ſuch Perſons, in like Manner, be the Subjects of involuntary Impreſſions, when they are awake.

V. 'Tis no Sign that religious Affections are truly holy and ſpiritual, or that they are not, that they come with Texts of Scripture, remarkably brought to the Mind.

'Tis no Sign that Affections are not gracious, that they are occaſioned by Scriptures ſo coming to Mind; provided it be the Scripture itſelf, or the Truth which the Scripture ſo brought contains and teaches, that is the Foundation of the Affection, and not merely or mainly the ſudden and unuſual Manner of it's coming to the Mind.

But on the other Hand, neither is it any Sign that Affections are gracious, that they ariſe on Occaſion of Scriptures brought ſuddenly and wonderfully to the Mind; whether thoſe Affections be Fear, or Hope, Joy, or Sorrow, or any other. Some ſeem to look upon this, a good Evidence that their Affections are ſaving; eſpecially if the Affections excited are Hope or Joy,

or

or any other which are pleasing and delightful. They will mention it as an Evidence that all is right, that their Experience *came with the Word*, and will say, "There were such and such sweet Promises "brought to my Mind: They came suddenly, as if "they were spoke to me: I had no Hand in bringing "such a Text to my own Mind: I was not thinking of "any Thing leading to it; it came all at once, so that "I was surprised. I had not thought of it a long Time "before; I did not know at first that it was Scripture; "I did not remember that ever I had read it." And it may be, they will add, "One Scripture came flowing in "after another, and so Texts all over the Bible, the "most sweet and pleasant, and the most apt and suita-"ble, which could be devised; and filled me full as "I could hold: I could not but stand and admire: "The Tears flow'd; I was full of Joy, and could not "doubt any longer." And thus, they think they have undoubted Evidence, that their Affections must be from God, and of the right Kind, and their State good: But without any Manner of Grounds. How come they by any such Rule, as that if any Affections or Experiences arise with Promises, and comfortable Texts of Scripture, unnaccountably brought to Mind, without their Recollection, or if a great Number of sweet Texts follow one another in a Chain, that this is a certain Evidence their Experiences are saving? Where is any such Rule to be found in the Bible, the great and only sure Directory in Things of this Nature?

What deceives many of the less understanding and considerate Sort of People, in this Matter, seems to be this; That the Scripture is the Word of God, and has nothing in it which is wrong, but is pure and perfect: And therefore, those Experiences which come from the Scripture must be right. But then it should be considered, Affections may arise on *occasion* of the Scripture, and not properly come *from* the Scripture, as the genuine Fruit of the Scripture, and by a right Use of it;

but

but from an Abuse of it. All that can be argued from the Purity and Perfection of the Word of God, with Respect to Experiences, is this, that those Experiences which are *agreeable* to the Word of God, are right, and can't be otherwise; and not that those Affections must be right, which arise *on Occasion* of the Word of God coming to the Mind.

What Evidence is there that the Devil can't bring Texts of Scripture to the Mind, and misapply them, to deceive Persons? There seems to be nothing in this which exceeds the Power of *Satan*. 'Tis no Work of such mighty Power, to bring Sounds or Letters to Persons Minds, that we have any Reason to suppose nothing short of Omnipotence can be sufficient for it. If *Satan* has Power to bring any Words or Sounds at all to Persons Minds, he may have Power to bring Words contained in the Bible. There is no higher Sort of Power required in Men, to make the Sounds which express the Words of a Text of Scripture, than to make the Sounds which express the Words of an idle Story or Song. And so the same Power in *Satan*, which is sufficient to renew one of those Kinds of Sounds in the Mind, is sufficient to renew the other: The different Signification, which depends wholly on Custom, alters not the Case, as to Ability to make or revive the Sounds or Letters. Or will any suppose, that Texts of Scripture are such sacred Things, that the Devil durst not abuse them, nor touch them? In this also they are mistaken. He who was bold enough to lay hold on Christ himself, and carry him hither and thither, into the Wilderness, and into an high Mountain, and to a Pinnacle of the Temple, is not afraid to touch the Scripture, and abuse that for his own Purposes: As he shew'd at the same Time that he was so bold with Christ, he then brought one Scripture and another, to deceive and tempt him. And if *Satan* did presume, and was permitted, to put Christ himself in Mind of Texts of Scripture to tempt *Him*, what Reason have we to determine, that he dare not, or will not be permitted

mitted, to put wicked Men in Mind of Texts of Scripture, to tempt and deceive *them?* And if *Satan* may thus abuſe one Text of Scripture, ſo he may another. It's being a very excellent Place of Scripture, a comfortable and precious Promiſe, alters not the Caſe, as to his Courage or Ability. And if he can bring one comfortable Text to the Mind, ſo he may a Thouſand; and may chooſe out ſuch Scriptures as tend moſt to ſerve his Purpoſe; and may heap up Scripture Promiſes, tending, according to the perverſe Application he makes of them, wonderfully to remove the riſing Doubts, and to confirm the falſe Joy and Confidence of a poor deluded Sinner.

We know the Devil's Inſtruments, corrupt and heretical Teachers, can and do pervert the Scripture, to their own and others Damnation; 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. We ſee they have the free Uſe of Scripture, in every Part of it: There is no Text ſo precious and ſacred, but they are permitted to abuſe it, to the eternal Ruin of Multitudes of Souls: And there are no Weapons they make Uſe of with which they do more Execution. And there is no Manner of Reaſon to determine, that the Devil is not permitted thus to uſe the Scripture, as well as his Inſtruments. For when the latter do it, they do it as his Inſtruments and Servants, and through his Inſtigation and Influence: And doubtleſs he does the ſame he inſtigates others to do: The Devil's Servants do but follow their Maſter, and do the ſame Work that he does himſelf.

And as the Devil can abuſe the Scripture, to deceive and deſtroy Men, ſo may Men's own Folly and Corruptions, as well. The Sin which is in Men, acts like it's Father. Men's own Hearts are deceitful like the Devil, and uſe the ſame Means to deceive.

So that 'tis evident, that Perſons may have high Affections of Hope and Joy, ariſing on Occaſion of Texts of Scripture, yea precious Promiſes of Scripture coming ſuddenly and remarkably to their Minds, as though they

were

were ſpoke to them, yea a great Multitude of ſuch Texts, following one another in a wonderful Manner, and yet all this be no Argument that theſe Affections are divine, or that they are any other than the Effects of *Satan*'s Deluſions.

And I would further obſerve, that Perſons may have raiſed and joyful Affections, which may come with the Word of God, and not only ſo, but from the Word, and thoſe Affections not be from *Satan*, nor yet properly from the Corruptions of their own Hearts, but from ſome Influence of the Spirit of God with the Word, and yet have nothing of the Nature of true and ſaving Religion in them. Thus the ſtony Ground Hearers had great Joy from the Word; yea, which is repreſented as ariſing from the Word, as Growth from a Seed; and their Affections had, in their Appearance, a very great and exact Reſemblance with thoſe repreſented by the Growth on the good Ground, the Difference not appearing, till it was diſcovered by the Conſequences, in a Time of Trial: And yet there was no ſaving Religion in theſe Affections.*

VI. 'Tis no Evidence that religious Affections are ſaving, or that they are otherwiſe, that there is an Appearance of Love in them.

There are no profeſſing Chriſtians who pretend, that this is an Argument againſt the Truth and ſaving Nature of religious Affections. But on the other Hand, there are ſome who ſuppoſe, it is a good Evidence that Affections are from the ſanctifying and ſaving Influences of the Holy Ghoſt. Their Argument is, that *Satan cannot love*; this Affection being directly contrary to the Devil

* Mr. *Stoddard*, in his *Guide to Chriſt*, ſpeaks of it as a *common Thing*, for Perſons while in a natural Condition, and before they have ever truly *accepted of Chriſt*, to have Scripture *Promiſes* come to them, with *a great deal of Refreſhing*; which they *take as Tokens of God's Love, and hope that God has accepted them*; and ſo are confident of their good Eſtate. Page 8, 9. Impreſſion *Anno* 1735.

Devil, whose very Nature is Enmity and Malice. And it is true, that nothing is more excellent, heavenly and divine than a Spirit of true Christian Love to God and Men: 'Tis more excellent than *Knowledge*, or *Prophecy*, or *Miracles*, or *speaking with the Tongue of Men and Angels*. 'Tis the Chief of the Graces of God's Spirit, and the Life, Essence and Sum of all true Religion; and that by which we are most conformed to Heaven, and most contrary to Hell and the Devil. But yet it is ill arguing from hence, that there are no Counterfeits of it. It may be observed, that the more excellent any Thing is, the more will be the Counterfeits of it. Thus there are many more Counterfeits of Silver and Gold, than of Iron and Copper; There are many false Diamonds and Rubies, but who goes about to counterfeit common Stones? Tho' the more excellent Things are, the more difficult it is to make any Thing that shall be like them, in their essential Nature and internal Virtue; yet the more manifold will the Counterfeits be, and the more will Art and Subtilty be exercised and displayed, in an exact Imitation of the Outward Appearance. Thus there is the greatest Danger of being cheated in buying of Medicines that are most excellent and sovereign, tho' it be most difficult to imitate them, with any Thing of the like Value and Virtue, and their Counterfeits are good for nothing when we have them. So it is with Christian Vertues and Graces; the Subtilty of *Satan*, and Men's deceitful Hearts, are wont chiefly to be exercised in counterfeiting those that are in highest Repute. So there are perhaps no Graces that have more Counterfeits than Love and Humility; these being Vertues wherein the Beauty of a true Christian does especially appear.

But with Respect to Love; it is plain by the Scripture, that Persons may have a Kind of religious Love, and yet have no saving Grace. Christ speaks of many professing Christians that have such Love, whose Love will not continue, and so shall fail of Salvation, Matth. xxiv.

12, 13. *And because Iniquity shall abound, the Love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the End, the same shall be saved.* Which latter Words plainly shew, that those spoken of before, whose Love should not *endure to the End*, but *wax cold*, should not be saved.

Persons may seem to have Love to God and Christ, yea to have very strong and violent Affections of this Nature, and yet have no Grace. For this was evidently the Case with many graceless *Jews*, such as cried Jesus up so high, following him Day and Night, without Meat, Drink or Sleep; such as said, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, and cried, *Hosanna, to the Son of* David.†

The Apostle seems to intimate, that there were many in his Days, who had a counterfeit Love to Christ, in Eph. vi. 24. *Grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ* in Sincerity. The last Word, in the Original, signifies *in Incorruption*; which shews that the Apostle was sensible that there were many who had a Kind of Love to Christ, whose Love was not pure and spiritual.

So also Christian Love to the People of God may be counterfeited. 'Tis evident by the Scripture, that there may be strong Affections of this Kind, without saving Grace; as there were in the *Galatians* towards the Apostle *Paul*, when they were ready to pluck out their Eyes and give them to him; altho' the Apostle expresses his Fear that their Affections were come to nothing, and that he had bestowed upon them Labour in vain, *Gal.* iv. 11, 15

VII. Persons having religious Affections of many Kinds accompanying one another, is not sufficient to determine whether they have any gracious Affections or no.

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† Agreeable to this, Mr. *Stoddard* observes, in his *Guide to Christ*, That some Sinners *have Pangs of Affection, and give an Account that they find a Spirit of Love to God, and of their aiming at the Glory of God, having that which has a great Resemblance of saving Grace*, and that *sometimes their common Affections are stronger than saving*. And supposes that sometimes natural Men may have such *violent Pangs of false Affection to God, that they may think themselves willing to be damned*. Page 21, and 65.

Though falſe Religion is wont to be maimed and monſtrous, and not to have that Entireneſs and Symmetry of Parts, which is to be ſeen in true Religion; yet there may be a great Variety of falſe Affections together, that may reſemble gracious Affections.

'Tis evident, that there are Counterfeits of all Kinds of gracious Affections; as of *Love to God*, and *Love to the Brethren*, as has been juſt now obſerved; ſo of *godly Sorrow for Sin*, as in *Pharaoh*, *Saul*, and *Ahab*, and the Children of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs; *Exod.* ix. 27. 1 *Sam.* xxiv. 16, 17. and xxvi. 21. 1 *Kings* xxi. 27. *Numb.* xiv. 39, 40. and of the *Fear of God*, as in the *Samaritans*, *who feared the Lord, and ſerved their own Gods* at the ſame Time; 2 *Kings* xvii 32, 33. and thoſe Enemies of God we read of Pſal. lxvi. 3. who *through the Greatneſs of God's Power*, *ſubmit themſelves to him*, or, as it is in the Hebrew, *lie unto him*, i. e. yield a counterfeit Reverence and Submiſſion; ſo of a *gracious Gratitude*, as in the Children of *Iſrael*, who ſang God's Praiſe at the red Sea, Pſal. cvi. 12. and *Naaman* the *Syrian*, after his miraculous Cure of his Leproſy, 2 *Kings* v. 15, &c.

So of *ſpiritual Joy*, as in the ſtony-ground Hearers, *Matth.* xiii. 20. and particularly many of *John the Baptiſt*'s Hearers, *John* v. 35. So of *Zeal*, as in *Jehu*, 2 *Kings* x. 16. and in *Paul* before his Converſion, *Gal.* i. 14. *Phil.* iii. 6. and the unbelieving *Jews*, *Acts* xxii. 3. *Rom.* x. 2. So graceleſs Perſons may have earneſt religious *Deſires*, which may be like *Balaam*'s Deſires, which he expreſſes under an extraordinary View that he had of the happy State of God's People, as diſtinguiſhed from all the reſt of the World, *Numb.* xxiii. 9, 10. They may alſo have a ſtrong *Hope* of eternal Life, as the Phariſees had.

And as Men, while in a State of Nature, are capable of a Reſemblance of all Kinds of religious Affections, ſo nothing hinders but that they may have many of them together. And what appears in Fact does abundantly evince

evince that it is very often so indeed. It seems commonly to be so, that when false Affections are raised high, there are many false Affections attend each other. The Multitude that attended Christ into *Jerusalem*, after that great Miracle of raising *Lazarus*, seem to be moved with many religious Affections at once, and all in a high Degree. They seem to be filled with *Admiration*, and there was a Shew of an high Affection of *Love*, and also of a great Degree of *Reverence*, in their laying their Garments on the Ground, for Christ to tread upon; and also of great *Gratitude* to him, for the great and good Works he had wrought, praising him with loud Voices for his Salvation; and earnest *Desires* of the Coming of God's Kingdom, which they suppose *Jesus* was now about to set up, and shewed great *Hopes* and raised Expectations of it, *expecting it would immediately appear*; and hence were filled with *Joy*, by which they were so animated in their Acclamations, as to make the whole City ring with the Noise of them; and appear'd great in their *Zeal* and forwardness to attend Jesus, and assist him without further Delay, now in the Time of the great Feast of the *Passover*, to set up his Kingdom. And it is easy from Nature, and the Nature of the Affections, to give an Account why, when one Affection is raised very high, that it should excite others; especially if the Affection which is raised high, be that of counterfeit *Love*, as it was in the Multitude who cried *Hosanna*. This will naturally draw many other Affections after it. For, as was observed before, Love is the Chief of the Affections, and as it were the Fountain of them. Let us suppose a Person who has been for some Time in great Exercise and Terror thro' Fear of Hell, and his Heart weaken'd with Distress and dreadful Apprehensions, and upon the Brink of Despair, and is all at once deliver'd, by being firmly made to believe, thro' some Delusion of *Satan*, that God has pardon'd him, and accepts him as the Object of his dear Love, and promises him eternal Life: as suppose through some Vision,

or

or ſtrong Idea or Imagination, ſuddenly excited in him, of a Perſon with a beautiful Countenance, ſmiling on him, and with Arms open, and with Blood dropping down, which the Perſon conceives to be Chriſt, without any other Enlightning of the Underſtanding, to give a View of the ſpiritual divine Excellency of Chriſt and his Fulneſs, and of the Way of Salvation reveal'd in the Goſpel; or perhaps by ſome Voice or Words coming as if they were ſpoke to him, ſuch as thoſe, *Son be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee*; or, *Fear not, it is the Father's good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom*; which he takes to be immdiately ſpoken by God to him, tho' there was no preceding Acceptance of Chriſt, or cloſing of the Heart with him: I ſay, if we ſhould ſuppoſe ſuch a Caſe, what various Paſſions would naturally croud at once, or one after another, into ſuch a Perſon's Mind? It is eaſy to be accounted for, from meer Principles of Nature, that a Perſon's Heart, on ſuch an Occaſion, ſhould be raiſed up to the Skies with Tranſports of Joy, and be fill'd with fervent Affection, to that imaginary God or Redeemer, who he ſuppoſes has thus reſcued him from the Jaws of ſuch dreadful Deſtruction, that his Soul was ſo amazed with the Fears of, and has received him with ſuch Endearment, as a peculiar Favourite; and that now he ſhould be fill'd with Admiration and Gratitude, and his Mouth ſhould be open'd, and be full of Talk about what he has experienc'd; and that, for a while, he ſhould think and ſpeak of ſcarce any Thing elſe, and ſhould ſeem to magnify that God who has done ſo much for him, and call upon others to rejoice with him, and appear with a chearful Countenance, and talk with a loud Voice: and however before his Deliverance, he was full of Quarrellings againſt the Juſtice of God, that now it ſhould be eaſy for him to ſubmit to God, and own his Unworthineſs, and cry out againſt himſelf, and appear to be very humble before God, and lie at his Feet as tame as a Lamb; and that he ſhould now confeſs his Unworthineſs, and cry out, *Why me? Why me?* (like

Saul,

like *Saul*, who when *Samuel* told him that God had appointed him to be King, makes answer, *Am not I a* Benjamite, *of the smallest of the Tribes of* Israel, *and my Family the least of all the Families of the Tribe of* Benjamin? *Wherefore then speakest thou so to me?* Much in the Language of *David*, the true Saint, 2 Sam. vii. 18. *Who am I, and what is my Father's House, that thou hast brought me hitherto!*) Nor is it to be wonder'd at, that now he should delight to be with them who acknowledge and applaud his happy Circumstances, and should love and esteem all such as admire him and what he has experienc'd, and have violent Zeal against all such as would make nothing of such Things, and be disposed openly to separate, and as it were to proclaim War with all who be not of his Party; and should now glory in his Sufferings, and be very much for condemning and censuring all who seem to doubt, or make any Difficulty of these Things; and while the Warmth of his Affections last, should be mighty forward to take Pains, and deny himself, to promote the Interest of the Party who he imagines favour such Things, and seem earnestly desirous to encrease the Number of them, as the *Pharisees* compassed Sea and Land to make one *Proselyte*.* And so I might go on, and mention many other Things, which will naturally arise in such Circumstances. He must have but slightly consider'd human Nature, who thinks such Things as these can't arise in this Manner, without any supernatural Interposition of divine Power.

As from true divine Love flow all christian Affections, so from a counterfeit Love in like Manner, naturally flow other false Affections. In both Cases Love is the Fountain, and the other Affections are the Streams,

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* "Associating with godly Men don't prove that a Man has Grace: "*Ahithophel* was *David*'s Companion. Sorrows for the Afflictions "of the Church, and Desires for the Conversion of Souls, don't "prove it. These Things may be found in carnal Men, and so can "be no Evidences of Grace." Stoddard's *Nature of saving Conversion*, p. 82.

The various Faculties, Principles and Affections of the human Nature, are as it were many Channels from one Fountain: If there be ſweet Water in the Fountain, ſweet Water will from thence flow out into thoſe various Channels; but if the Water in the Fountain be poiſonous, then poiſonous Streams will alſo flow out into all thoſe Channels. So that the Channels and Streams will be alike, correſponding one with another; but the great Difference will lie in the Nature of the Water. Or, Man's Nature may be compar'd to a Tree, with many Branches, coming from one Root: If the Sap in the Root be good, there will alſo be good Sap diſtributed throughout the Branches, and the Fruit that is brought forth will be good and wholeſome; but if the Sap in the Root and Stock be poiſonous, ſo it will be in many Branches, (as in the other Caſe) and the Fruit will be deadly. The Tree in both Caſes may be alike; there may be an exact Reſemblance in Shape; but the Difference is found only in eating the Fruit. 'Tis thus (in ſome Meaſure at leaſt) oftentimes, between Saints and Hypocrites. There is ſometimes a very great Similitude between true and falſe Experiences, in their Appearance, and in what is expreſſed and related by the Subjects of them: and the Difference between them is much like the Difference between the Dreams of *Pharaoh*'s chief Butler and Baker; they ſeem'd to be much alike; inſomuch that when *Joſeph* interpreted the chief Butler's Dream, that he ſhould be deliver'd from his Impriſonment, and reſtor'd to the King's Favour, and his honourable Office in the Palace, the chief Baker had raiſed Hopes and Expectations, and told his Dream alſo; but he was wofully diſappointed; and tho' his Dream was ſo much like the happy and well-boding Dream of his Companion, yet it was quite contrary in its Iſſue.

VIII. Nothing can certainly be determined concerning the Nature of the Affections by this, that Comforts and Joys ſeem to follow Awakenings and Convictions of Conſcience, in a *certain Order*. Many

Many Persons seem to be prejudiced against Affections and Experiences, that come in such a Method, as has been much insisted on by many Divines; first, such Awakenings, Fears and aweful Apprehensions, followed with such legal Humblings, in a Sense of total Sinfulness and Helplesness, and then, such and such Light and Comfort; they look upon all such Schemes, laying down such Methods and Steps, to be of Men's devising: And particularly if high Affections of Joy follow great Distress and Terror, it is made by many an Argument against those Affections. But such Prejudices and Objections are without Reason or Scripture. Surely it can't be unreasonable to suppose, that before God delivers Persons from a State of Sin and Exposedness to eternal Destruction, he should give them some considerable Sense of the Evil he delivers from; that they may be delivered sensibly, and understand their own Salvation, and know something of what God does for them. As Men that are saved are in two exceeding different States, first a State of Condemnation, and then in a State of Justification and Blessedness; and as God in the Work of the Salvation of Mankind, deals with them suitably to their intelligent rational Nature; so it seems reasonable, and agreeable to God's Wisdom, that Men who are saved, should be in these two States sensibly, first, that they should sensibly to themselves, be in a State of Condemnation, and so in a State of woful Calamity and dreadful Misery, and so afterwards sensibly in a State of Deliverance and Happiness; and that they should be first sensible of their absolute extreme Necessity, and afterwards of Christ's Sufficiency and God's Mercy thro' him.

And that it is God's Manner of dealing with Men, to *lead them into a Wilderness, before he speaks comfortably to them*, and so to order it, that they shall be brought into Distress, and made to see their own Helplesness, and absolute Dependance on his Power and Grace, before he appears to work any great Deliverance for them, is abundantly manifest by the Scripture. Then is God

wont to *repent himself for his professing People, when their Strength is gone, and there is none shut up or left*; and when they are Brought to see that their false God's can't help them, and that the Rock in whem they trusted is vain; *Deut.* xxxii. 36, 37. Before God delivered the Children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, they were prepared for it, by being made to *see, that they were in an evil Case*, and *to cry unto God, because of their hard Bondage*; Exod. ii. 23, and v. 19. And before God wrought that great Deliverance for them at the Red Sea, they were brought into great Distress, *the Wilderness had shut them in*, they could not turn to the right Hand nor the left, and the *Red Sea* was before them, and the great *Egytian* Host behind, and they were brought to see that they could do nothing to help themselves, and that if God did not help them, they should be immediately swallowed up; and then God appeared, and turn'd their Cries into Songs. So before they were brought to their Rest, and to enjoy the Milk and Honey of *Canaan*, God *led them through a great and terrible Wilderness, that he might humble them, and teach them what was in their Heart, and so do them Good in their latter End*; Deut. viii. 2, 16. The Woman that had the Issue of Blood twelve Years, was not delivered, 'till she had first *spent all her Living on earthly Physicians, and could not be healed of any*, and so was left helpless, having no more Money to spend; and then she came to the great Physician, without any Money or Price, and was healed by him; *Luke* viii. 43, 44. Before Christ would answer the Request of the Woman of *Canaan*, he first seemed utterly to deny her, and humbled her, and brought her to own herself worthy to be called a Dog; and then he shewed her Mercy, and received her as a dear Child; *Mat.* xv. 22, &c. The Apostle *Paul*, before a remarkable Deliverance, was *pressed out of Measure, above Strength, insomuch that he despaired even of Life*; *but had the Sentence of Death in himself, that he might not trust in himself, but in God that raiseth the Dead*; 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10.

There

There was first a great Tempest, and the Ship was covered with the Waves, and just ready to sink, and the Disciples were brought to cry to Jesus, *Lord, save us, we perish*; and then the Winds and Seas were rebuked, and there was a great Calm; *Matth.* viii. 24, 25, 26. The Leper, before he is cleansed, must have his Mouth stopped, by a covering on his upper Lip, and was to acknowledge his great Misery and utter Uncleanness, by rending his Cloaths, and crying, *Unclean, unclean:* Levit. xiii. 45. And backsliding *Israel*, before God heals them, are brought to *acknowledge that they have sinned, and have not obeyed the Voice of the Lord*, and to see that *they lye down in their Shame, and that Confusion covers them*, and *that in vain is Salvation hoped for from the Hills, and from the Multitude of Mountains*, and that God only can save them; *Jer.* iii. 23, 24, 25. *Joseph*, who was sold by his Brethren, and therein was a Type of Christ, brings his Brethren into great Perplexity and Distress, and brings them to reflect on their Sin, and to say we are verily guilty; and at last to resign up themselves entirely into his Hands for Bondmen; and then reveals himself to them, as their Brother and their Saviour.

And if we consider those extraordinary Manifestations which God made of himself to Saints of Old, we shall find that he commonly first manifested himself in a Way which was terrible, and then by those Things that were comfortable. So it was with *Abraham*; first a *Horror of great Darkness fell upon him*, and then God revealed himself to him in sweet Promises; *Gen.* xv. 12, 13. So it was with *Moses* at Mount *Sinai*; first, God appeared to him in all the Terrors of his dreadful Majesty, so that *Moses* said, I exceedingly fear and quake, and then he made all his Goodness to pass before him, and proclaimed his Name, *the Lord God gracious and merciful*, &c. So it was with *Elijah*; first, there is a stormy Wind, and Earthquake, and devouring Fire, and then a still, small, sweet Voice; 1 *Kings* xix. So it was with *Daniel*; he

first

first saw Christ's Countenance as Lightning, that terrified him, and caused him to faint away; and then he is strengthened and refreshed with such comfortable Words as these, *O* Daniel, *a Man greatly beloved*, Dan. x. So it was with the Apostle *John*, Rev. i. And there is an Analogy observable in God's Dispensations and Deliverances which he works for his People, and the Manifestations which he makes of himself to them, both ordinary and extraordinary.

But there are many Things in Scripture which do more directly shew, that this is God's ordinary Manner in working Salvation for the Souls of Men, and in the Manifestations God makes of himself and of his Mercy in Christ, in the ordinary Works of his Grace on the Hearts of Sinners. The Servant that owed his Prince ten thousand Talents, is first held to his Debt, and the King pronounces Sentence of Condemnation upon him, and commands him to be sold, and his Wife and Children, and Payment to be made; and thus he humbles him, and brings him to own the whole Debt to be just, and then forgives him all. The prodigal Son spends all he has, and is brought to see himself in extreme Circumstances, and to humble himself, and own his Unworthiness, before he is relieved and feasted by his Father; *Luke* xv. Old inveterate Wounds must be searched to the Bottom, in order to Healing: And the Scripture compares Sin, the Wound of the Soul, to this, and speaks of healing this Wound without thus searching of it, as vain and deceitful; *Jer.* viii. 11. Christ, in the Work of his Grace on the Hearts of Men, is compared to Rain on the mown Grass, Grass that is cut down with a Scythe, *Psal.* lxxii. 6. representing his refreshing, comforting Influences on the wounded Spirit. Our first Parents, after they had sinned, were first terrified with God's Majesty and Justice, and had their Sin, with its Aggravations, set before them by their Judge, before they were relieved, by the Promise of the Seed of the Woman. Christians are spoken of as

those

those *that have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before them*, Heb. vi. 18. which Representation implies great Fear, and Sense of Danger preceeding. To the like Purpose, Christ is called *a hiding Place from the Wind, and a Covert from the Tempest, and as Rivers of Water in a dry Place, and as the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary Land*; Isai. xxxii. at the Beginning. And it seems to be the natural Import of the Word *Gospel*, glad Tydings, that it is News of Deliverance and Salvation, after great Fear and Distress. There is all Reason to suppose, that God deals with particular Believers, as he dealt with his Church, which he first made to hear his Voice in the Law, with terrible Thunders and Lightnings, and kept her under that School Master, to prepare her for Christ; and then comforted her with the joyful Sound of the Gospel from Mount *Sion*. So likewise *John the Baptist* came to prepare the Way for Christ, and prepare Men's Hearts for his Reception, by shewing them their Sins, and by bringing the self-righteous *Jews* off from their own Righteousness, telling them that they were a *Generation of Vipers*, and shewing them their Danger of *the Wrath to come*, telling them that *the Ax was laid at the Root of the Trees*, &c.

And if it be indeed God's Manner (as I think the foregoing Considerations shew that it undoubtedly is) before he gives Men the Comfort of a Deliverance from their Sin and Misery, to give them a considerable Sense of the Greatness and Dreadfulness of those Evils, and their extreme Wretchedness by Reason of them; surely it is not unreasonable to suppose, that Persons, at least oftentimes, while under these Views, should have great Distress and terrible Apprehensions of Mind: Especially if it be considered what these Evils are, that they have a View of; which are no other than great and manifold Sins, against the infinite Majesty of the great Jehovah, and the Suffering of the Fierceness of his Wrath to all Eternity. And the more so still, when we have many plain Instances in Scripture, of Persons that have actually

been

been brought into extreme Diſtreſs, by ſuch Convictions, before they have received ſaving Conſolations: As the Multitude at *Jeruſalem*, who were *pricked in their Heart, and ſaid unto* Peter, *and the reſt of the Apoſtles, Men and Brethren, What ſhall we do?* And the Apoſtle *Paul*, who *trembled and was aſtoniſhed*, before he was comforted; and the *Jailor*, when *he called for a Light, and ſprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before* Paul *and* Silas, *and ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?*

From theſe Things it appears to be very unreaſonable in profeſſing Chriſtians, to make this an Objection againſt the Truth and ſpiritual Nature of the comfortable and joyful Affections which any have, that they follow ſuch awful Apprehenſions and Diſtreſſes, as have been mentioned.

And on the other Hand, It is no Evidence that Comforts and Joys are right, becauſe they ſucceed great Terrors, and amazing Fears of Hell.* This ſeems to be what ſome Perſons lay great Weight upon; eſteeming great Terrors an Evidence of a great Work of the Law wrought on the Heart, well preparing the Way for ſolid Comfort: Not conſidering that Terror, and a Conviction of Conſcience, are different Things. For though Convictions of Conſcience do often cauſe Terror; yet they don't conſiſt in it; and Terrors do often ariſe from other Cauſes. Convictions of Conſcience, through the Influences of God's Spirit, conſiſt in Conviction of Sinfulneſs of Heart and Practice, and of the Dreadfulneſs of Sin, as committed againſt a God of terrible Majeſty, infinite Holineſs and Hatred of Sin, and ſtrict Juſtice in puniſhing of it. But there are ſome Perſons that have frightful Apprehenſions of Hell, a dreadful

* Mr. *Shepard* ſpeaks of Men's "being caſt down as low as Hell "by Sorrow, and lying under Chains, quaking in Apprehenſion of "Terror to come, and then raiſed up to Heaven in Joy, not able to "live; and yet not rent from Luſt, and ſuch are Objects of Pity now, "and are like to be the Objects of Terror at the great Day." *Parable of the ten Virgins*, P. I. pag. 125.

dreadful Pit ready to swallow them up, and Flames just ready to lay hold of them, and Devils around them, ready to seize them; who at the same Time seem to have very little proper Enlightenings of Conscience, really convincing them of their Sinfulness of Heart and Life. The Devil, if permitted, can terrify Men as well as the Spirit of God: 'Tis a Work natural to him, and he has many Ways of doing it, in a Manner tending to no Good. He may exceedingly affright Persons, by impressing on them many external Images and Ideas, of a Countenance frowning, a Sword drawn, black Clouds of Vengeance, Words of an awful Doom pronounced,‡ Hell gaping, Devils coming, and the like; not to convince Persons of Things that are true, and revealed in the Word of God, but to lead them to vain and groundless Determinations; as, that their Day is past, that they are reprobated, that God is implacable, that he has come to a Resolution immediately to cut them off, &c.

And the Terrors which some Persons have, are very very much owing to the particular Constitution and Temper they are of. Nothing is more manifest, than that some Persons are of such a Temper and Frame, that their Imaginations are more strongly impressed with every Thing they are affected with, than others; and the Impression on the Imagination re-acts on the Affection, and raises that still higher; and so Affection and Imagination act reciprocally, one on another, till their Affection is raised to a vast Height, and the Person is swallowed up, and loses all Possession of himself.§

And

‡ "The Way of the Spirit's Working, when it does convince Men, "is by enlightening natural Conscience. The Spirit does not work "by giving a Testimony, but by assisting natural Conscience to do "its Work. Natural Conscience is the Instrument in the Hand of "Hand of God, to accuse, condemn, terrify, and to urge to Duty. "The Spirit of God leads Men into the Consideration of their Danger, and makes them to be affected therewith; Prov. xx. 27. *The "Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord, searching all the inward "Parts of the Belly.*" Stoddard's *Guide to Christ*, p. 44.

§ "The famous Mr. *Perkins* distinguishes between *those Sorrows "that come through Convictions of Conscience, and melancholic Passions*

"*rising*

And some speak of a great Sight they have of their Wickedness, who really when the Matter comes to be well examined into and thoroughly weighed, are found to have little or no Convictions of Conscience. They tell of a dreadful hard Heart, and how their Heart lies like a Stone; when truly they have none of those Things in their Minds or Thoughts, wherein the Hardness of Men's Hearts does really consist. They tell of a dreadful Load and Sink of Sin, a Heap of black and loathsome Filthiness within them; when, if the Matter be carefully enquired into, they have not in View any Thing wherein the Corruption of Nature does truly consist, nor have they any Thought of any particular Thing wherein their Hearts are sinfully defective, or fall short of what ought to be in them, or any Exercises at all of Corruption in them. And many think also they have great Convictions of their actual Sins, who truly have none. They tell how their Sins are set in Order before them, they see them stand encompassing them round in a Row, with a dreadful frightful Appearance; when really they have not so much as one of the Sins they have been guilty of in the Course of their Lives, coming into View, that they are affected with the Aggravations of.

And if Persons have had great Terrors, which really have been from the awakening and convincing Influences of the Spirit of God, it don't thence follow that their Terrors must needs issue in true Comfort. The unmortified Corruption of the Heart may quench the Spirit of God (after he has been striving) by leading Men to presumptuous, and self-exalting Hopes and Joys, as well as otherwise. 'Tis not every Woman who is really in Travail, that brings forth a real Child; but it may be a monstrous Production, without any Thing of the Form or Properties of human Nature belonging to it.

Pharaoh's

"*rising only from mere Imaginations, strongly conceived in the Brain*; "*which he says, usually come on a sudden, like Lightning into a House.*" Vol. 1. of his Works, p. 385.

Pharaoh's chief Baker, after he had lain in the Dungeon with *Joseph*, had a Vision that raised his Hopes, and he was lifted up out of the Dungeon, as well as the chief Butler; but it was to be hanged.

But if Comforts and Joys do not only come after great Terrors and Awakenings, but there be an Appearance of *such* preparatory Convictions and Humiliations, and brought about very distinctly, by *such* Steps, and in *such* a Method, as has frequently been observable in true Converts; this is no certain Sign that the Light and Comforts which follow are true and saving. And for these following Reasons,

First, As the Devil can counterfeit all the saving Operations and Graces of the Spirit of God, so he can counterfeit those Operations that are preparatory to Grace. If Satan can counterfeit those Effects of God's Spirit, which are special, divine and sanctifying; so that there shall be a very great Resemblance, in all that can be observed by others; much more easily may he imitate those Works of God's Spirit which are common, and which Men, while they are yet his own Children, are the Subjects of. These Works are in no wise so much above him as the other. There are no Works of God that are so high and divine, and above the Powers of Nature, and out of the Reach of the Power of all Creatures, as those Works of his Spirit, whereby he forms the Creature in his own Image, and makes it to be a Partaker of the divine Nature. But if the Devil can be the Author of such Resemblances of these as have been spoken of, without doubt he may of those that are of an infinitely inferior Kind. And it is abundantly evident in Fact, that there are false Humiliations, and false Submissions, as well as false Comforts.* How far

was

* The venerable *Stoddard* observes, "A Man may say, that now "he can justify God however he deals with him, and not be brought "off from his own Righteousness; and that some Men do justify "God, from a partial Conviction of the Righteousness of their Con-"demnation;

was *Saul* brought, tho' a very wicked Man, and of a haughty Spirit, when he (tho' a great King) was brought in Conviction of his Sin, as it were to fall down, all in Tears, weeping aloud, before *David* his own Subject, (and one that he had for a long Time mortally hated, and openly treated as an Enemy) and condemn himself before him, crying out, *Thou art more righteous than I. Thou hast rewarded me Good, whereas I have rewarded thee Evil!* And at another Time, *I have sinned, I have played the Fool, I have erred exceedingly,* 1 Sam. xxiv. 15, 17, and Chap. xxvi. 21, And yet *Saul* seems then to have had very little of the Influences of the Spirit of God, it being after God's Spirit had departed from him, and given him up, and an evil Spirit from the Lord troubled him. And if this proud Monarch, in a Pang of Affection, was brought to humble himself so low, before a Subject that he hated, and still continued an Enemy to; there doubtless may be Appearances of great Conviction and Humiliation in Men, before God, while they yet remain Enemies to him, and tho' they finally continue so. There is oftentimes in Men who are terrified thro' Fears of Hell, a great Appearance of their being brought off from their own Righteousness, when they are not brought off from it in all Ways, altho' they are in many Ways that are more plain and visible. They have only exchang'd some Ways of trusting in their own Righteousness, for others that are more secret and subtil. Oftentimes a great Degree of Discouragement, as to many Things they used to depend upon, is taken for Humiliation: And that is called a Submission to God, which is no absolute Submission, but has some secret Bargain in it, that it is hard to discover.

Secondly,

" demnation; Conscience takes Notice of their Sinfulness, and tells " them that they may be righteously damn'd; as *Pharaoh*, who justi- " fied God, *Exod.* ix. 27. And they give some Kind of Consent to " it, but many Times it don't continue, they have only a Pang upon " them, that usually dies away after a little Time." *Guide to Christ*, p. 71.

Secondly, If the Operations and Effects of the Spirit of God, in the Convictions and Comforts of true Converts, may be sophisticated, then the Order of them may be imitated. If Satan can imitate the Things themselves, he may easily put them one after another, in such a certain Order. If the Devil can make A, B, and C, 'tis as easy for him to put A first, and B next, and C next, as to range them in a contrary Order. The Nature of divine Things is harder for the Devil to imitate, than their Order. He can't *exactly* imitate divine Operations in their Nature, tho' his Counterfeits may be very much like them in external Appearance; but he can exactly imitate their Order. When Counterfeits are made, there is no divine Power needful in order to the placing one of them first, and another last. And therefore no Order or Method of Operations and Experiences, is any certain Sign of their Divinity. That only is to be trusted to, as a certain Evidence of Grace, which Satan cannot do, and which it is impossible should be brought to pass by any Power short of divine.

Thirdly, We have no certain Rule to determine how far God's own Spirit may go in those Operations and Convictions which in themselves are not spiritual and saving, and yet the Person that is the Subject of them, never be converted, but fall short of Salvation at last. There is no necessary Connection in the Nature of Things, between any Thing that a natural Man may experience, while in a State of Nature, and the saving Grace of God's Spirit. And if there be no Connection in the Nature of Things, then there can be no known and certain Connection at all, unless it be by divine Revelation. But there is no revealed certain Connection between a State of Salvation and any Thing that a natural Man can be the Subject of, before he believes in Christ. God has revealed no certain Connection between Salvation, and any Qualifications in Men, but only Grace and its Fruits. And therefore we don't find any legal Convictions, or Comforts following those

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legal Convictions, in any certain Method or Order, ever once mention'd in the Scripture, as certain Signs of Grace, or Things peculiar to the Saints; altho' we do find gracious Operations and Effects themselves, so mention'd, Thousands of Times. Which should be enough with Christians, who are willing to have the Word of God, rather than their own Philosophy, and Experiences and Conjectures, as their sufficient and sure Guide in Things of this Nature.

Fourthly, Experience does greatly confirm, that Persons seeming to have Convictions and Comforts following one another in such a Method and Order, as is frequently observable in true Converts, is no certain Sign of Grace.* I appeal to all those Ministers in this Land, who have had much Occasion of dealing with Souls, in the late extraordinary Season, whether there have not been many who don't prove well, that have given a fair Account of their Experiences, and have seem'd to be converted according to Rule, *i. e.* with Convictions and Affections, succeeding distinctly and exactly, in that Order and Method, which has been ordinarily insisted on, as the Order of the Operations of the Spirit of God in Conversion.

And as a seeming to have this Distinctness as to Steps and Method, is no certain Sign that a Person is converted; so a being without it, is no Evidence that a Person is not converted. For tho' it might be made evident to a Demonstration, on Scripture Principles, that a Sinner can't be brought heartily to receive Christ as his Saviour, who is not convinced of his Sin and Misery, and of his own Emptiness and Helplessness, and his just desert of eternal

* Mr. *Stoddard*, who had much Experience of Things of this Nature, long ago observed, that converted and unconverted Men can't be certainly distinguished by the Account they give of their Experience: The same *Relation of Experiences being common to both.* And *that many Persons have given a fair Account of a Work of Conversion, that have carried well in the Eye of the World for several Years, but have not proved well at last*, Appeal to the Learned, pa. 75, and 76.

eternal Condemnation; and that therefore such Convictions must be some Way *implied* in what is wrought in his Soul; yet nothing proves it to be necessary, that all those Things which are implied or presupposed in an Act of Faith in Christ must be plainly and distinctly wrought in the Soul, in so many successive and separate Works of the Spirit that shall be, each one, plain and manifest, in all who are truly converted. On the contrary, (as Mr. *Shepard* observes) sometimes the Change made in a Saint, at first Work, is like a confused Chaos; so that the Saints know not what to make of it. The Manner of the Spirit's proceeding in them that are born of the Spirit, is very often exceeding mysterious and unsearchable: We, as it were, hear the Sound of it, the Effect of it is discernable; but no Man can tell whence it came, or whither it went: And 'tis oftentimes as difficult to know the Way of the Spirit in the new Birth, as in the first Birth: Eccl. xi. 5. *Thou knowest not what is the Way of the Spirit, or how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child: Even so thou knowest not the Work of God, that worketh all.* The ingenerating of a Principle of Grace in the Soul, seems in Scripture to be compared to the conceiving of Christ in the Womb; *Gal.* iv. 19. And therefore the Church is called Christ's Mother, *Cant.* iii. 11. And so is every particular Believer, *Matth.* xii. 49, 50. And the Conception of Christ in the Womb of the blessed Virgin, by the Power of the Holy Ghost, seems to be a designed Resemblance of the Conception of Christ in the Soul of a Believer, by the Power of the same Holy Ghost. And we know not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow, either in the Womb, or Heart that conceives this holy Child. The new Creature may use that Language in Psal. cxxxix. 14. 15. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvellous are thy Works: And that my Soul knoweth right well. My Substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret.* Concerning the Generation of Christ, both in his Person, and also in

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the Hearts of his People, it may be ſaid, as in Iſai. liii. 8. *Who can declare his Generation.* We know not the Works of God, that worketh all. *'Tis the Glory of God to conceal a Thing*, (Prov. xxv. 2.) and to have *his Path as it were in the mighty Waters, that his Footſteps may not be known:* And eſpecially in the Works of his Spirit on the Hearts of Men, which are the higheſt and chief of his Works. And therefore it is ſaid, Iſai. xl. 13. *Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his Counſellor, hath taught him.* 'Tis to be feared that ſome have gone too far towards directing the Spirit of the Lord, and marking out his Foot ſteps for him, and limiting him to certain Steps and Methods. Experience plainly ſhews, that God's Spirit is unſearchable and untraceable, in ſome of the beſt of Chriſtians, in the Method of his Operations, in their Converſion: Nor does the Spirit of God proceed diſcernably in the Steps of a particular eſtabliſhed Scheme, one half ſo often as is imagined. A Scheme of what is neceſſary, and according to a Rule already received and eſtabliſhed by common Opinion, has a vaſt (tho' to many) a very inſenſible Influence in forming Perſons Notions of the Steps and Method of their own Experiences. I know very well what their Way is; for I have had much Opportunity to obſerve it. Very often, at firſt, their Experiences appear like a confuſed *Chaos*, as Mr. *Shepard* expreſſes it: But then thoſe Paſſages of their Experience are pick'd out, that have moſt of the Appearance of ſuch particular Steps that are inſiſted on; and theſe are dwelt upon in the Thoughts, and theſe are told of from Time to Time, in the Relation they give: Theſe Parts grow brighter and brighter in their View; and others, being neglected, grow more and more obſcure: And what they have experienc'd is inſenſibly ſtrain'd to bring all to an exact Conformity to the Scheme that is eſtabliſhed. And it becomes natural for Miniſters, who have to deal with them and direct them that inſiſt upon Diſtinctneſs and Clearneſs of Method, to do ſo too.

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But yet there has been ſo much to be ſeen of the Operations of the Spirit of God, of late, that they who have had much to do with Souls, and are not blinded with a ſeven-fold Veil of Prejudice, muſt know that the Spirit is ſo exceeding various in the Manner of his operating, that in many Caſes it is impoſſible to trace him, or find out his Way,

What we have principally to do with, in our Enquiries into our own State, or Directions we give to others, is the *Nature* of the Effect that God has brought to paſs in the Soul. As to the Steps which the Spirit of God took to bring that Effect to paſs, we may leave them to him. We are often in Scripture expreſly directed to try ourſelves by the *Nature* of the Fruits of the Spirit; but no where by the Spirit's *Method* of producing them.* Many do greatly err in their Notions of a clear Work of Converſion; calling that a clear Work, where the ſucceſſive Steps of Influence, and Method of Experience is clear: Whereas that indeed is the cleareſt Work (not where the Order of *doing* is cleareſt) but where the ſpiritual and divine Nature of the Work *done*, and Effect *wrought*, is moſt clear.

IX.

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* Mr. *Shepard*, ſpeaking of the Soul's cloſing with Chriſt, ſays, "As a Child cannot tell how his Soul comes into it, nor it may be "when; but afterwards it ſees and feels that Life; ſo that he were "as bad as a Beaſt, that ſhould deny an immortal Soul; ſo here." Parable of the ten Virgins, Part II. p. 172.

"If the Man do not know the Time of his Converſion, or firſt "cloſing with Chriſt; the Miniſter may not draw any peremptory "Concluſion from thence, that he is not godly." *Stoddard*'s Guide to Chriſt, p. 13.

"Do not think there is no Compunction, or Senſe of Sin, wrought "in the Soul, becauſe you cannot ſo clearly diſcern and feel it; nor "the Time of the Working, and firſt Beginning of it. I have "known many that have come with their Complaints, that they *were "never humbled, they never felt it ſo*; yet there it hath been, and "many Times they have ſeen it, by the other Spectacles, and bleſs'd "God for it." *Shepard*'s ſound Believer, p. 38. the late Impreſſion in *Boſton*.

IX. 'Tis no certain Sign that the religious Affections which Persons have are such as have in them the Nature of true Religion, or that they have not, that they dispose Persons to spend much Time in Religion, and to be zealously engaged in the external Duties of Worship.

This has, very unreasonably, of late been looked upon as an Argument against the religious Affections which some have had, that they spend so much Time in reading, praying, singing, hearing Sermons, and the like. 'Tis plain from the Scripture, that it is the Tendency of true Grace to cause Persons very much to delight in such religious Exercises. True Grace had this Effect on *Anna* the Propheteſs; Luke i. 37. *She departed not from the Temple; but served God with Fastings and Prayers, Night and Day.* And Grace had this Effect upon the primitive Christians in *Jerusalem*; Acts ii. 46, 47. *And they continuing daily, with one Accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness, and Singleness of Heart, praising God.* Grace made *Daniel* delight in the Duty of Prayer, and solemnly to attend it three Times a Day: As it also did David, Psal. lv. 17. *Evening, Morning, and at Noon,* will I pray. Grace makes the Saints delight in singing Praises to God. Psal. cxxxv. 3. *Sing Praises unto his Name, for it is pleasant.* And cxlvii. 1. *Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing Praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and Praise is comely.* It also causes them to delight to hear the Word of God preached, It makes the Gospel a joyful Sound to them; Psal. lxxxix. 15. And makes the Feet of those who publish these good Tidings, to be beautiful: Isai. lii. 7. *How beautiful upon the Mountains are the Feet of him that bringeth good Tidings,* &c. It makes them love God's publick Worship; Psal. xxvi. 8. *Lord, I have loved the Habitation of thy House, and the Place where thine Honour dwelleth.* And xxvii. 4. *One Thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, all the Days of my Life; to behold the Beauty of the Lord,*

Lord, and to enquire in his Temple. Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2, &c.—*How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth, for the Courts of the Lord.—Yea the Sparrow hath found an House, and the Swallow a Nest for herself, where she may lay her Young, even thine Altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thine House; they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the Man in whose Heart are the Ways of them, who passing through the Valley of* Baca,—*go from Strength to Strength, every one of them in* Zion *appeareth before God.*—Verse 10. *A Day in thy Courts is better than a Thousand.*

This is the Nature of true Grace. But yet, on the other Hand, Persons being disposed to abound and to be zealously engaged in the external Exercises of Religion, and to spend much Time in them, is no sure Evidence of Grace; because such a Disposition is found in many that have no Grace. So it was with the *Israelites* of old, whose Services were abominable to God; they attended the *new Moons, and Sabbaths, and calling of Assemblies, and spread forth their Hands, and made many Prayers*; Isai. i. 12,——15. So it was with the *Pharisees*; they *made long Prayers, and fasted twice a Week.* False Religion may cause Persons to be loud and earnest in Prayer: Isai. lviii. 4. *Ye shall not fast as ye do this Day, to cause your Voice to be heard on high.* That Religion which is not spiritual and saving, may cause Men to delight in religious Duties and Ordinances: Isai lviii. 2. *Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my Ways; as a Nation that did Righteousness, and forsook not the Ordinance of their God: They ask of me the Ordinances of Justice, they take delight in approaching to God.* It may cause them to take Delight in hearing the Word of God preached; as it was with *Ezekiel*'s Hearers, Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32. *And they come unto thee as my People cometh, and they sit before thee as my People, and they hear thy Words; but they will not do them: for with their Mouth they shew much Love; but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.*

And lo, thou art unto them, as a very lovely Song, of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument: For they hear thy Words, but they do them not. So it was with *Herod*, he *heard* John the Baptist *gladly*: Mark vi. 20. So it was with others of his Hearers, *for a Season, they rejoiced in his Light*; John v. 35. So the stony-ground Hearers *heard the Word with Joy.*

Experience shews that Persons, from false Religion, may be inclined to be exceeding abundant in the external Exercises of Religion; yea, to give themselves up to them, and devote almost their whole Time to them. Formerly a Sort of People were very numerous in the *Romish* Church, called *Recluses*; who forsook the World, and utterly abandon'd the Society of Mankind, and shut themselves up close, in a narrow Cell, with a Vow never to stir out of it, nor to see the Face of any of Mankind any more; (unless that they might be visited in Case of Sickness) to spend all their Days in the Exercises of Devotion and Converse with God. There were also in old Time, great Multitudes called *Hermits* and *Anchorites*, that left the World to spend all their Days in lonesome Deserts, to give themselves up to religious Contemplations and Exercises of Devotion; some Sorts of them having no Dwellings, but the Caves and Vaults of the Mountains, and no Food, but the spontaneous Productions of the Earth.——I once lived for many Months, next Door to a *Jew*, (the Houses adjoining one to another) and had much Opportunity daily to observe him; who appeared to me the devoutest Person that ever I saw in my Life: great Part of his Time being spent in Acts of Devotion, at his eastern Window, which open'd next to mine, seeming to be most earnestly engaged, not only in the Day Time, but sometimes whole Nights.

X. Nothing can be certainly known of the Nature of religious Affections by this, that they much dispose Persons with their Mouths to praise and glorify God.

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This indeed is implied in what has been just now observed, of abounding and spending much Time in the external Exercises of Religion, and was also hinted before; but because many seem to look upon it as a bright Evidence of gracious Affection, when Persons appear greatly disposed to praise and magnify God, to have their Mouths full of his Praises, and affectionately to be calling on others to praise and extol him, I thought it deserved a more particular Consideration.

No Christian will make it an Argument against a Person, that he seems to have such a Disposition. Nor can it reasonably be look'd upon as an Evidence for a Person, if those Things that have been already observed and proved, be duly considered, *viz.* that Persons, without Grace, may have high Affections towards God and Christ, and that their Affections, being strong, may fill their Mouths, and incline them to speak much, and very earnestly, about the Things they are affected with, and that there may be Counterfeits of all Kinds of gracious Affection. But it will appear more evidently and directly, that this is no certain Sign of Grace, if we consider what Instances the Scripture gives us of it in those that were graceless. We often have an Account of this, in the Multitude that were present when Christ preached and wrought Miracles; Mark ii. 12. *And immediately he arose, took up his Bed, and went forth before them all: Insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this Fashion!* So Matth. ix. 8. and Luke v. 26. Also Matth. xv. 31. *Insomuch that the Multitude wondered, when they saw the Dumb to speak, and the Maimed to be whole, the Lame to walk, and the Blind to see; and they glorified the God of* Israel. So we are told, that on Occasion of Christ's raising the Son of the Widow of *Nain*, Luke vii. 16. *There came a great Fear on all; and they glorified God, saying, that a great Prophet is risen up among us, and that God hath visited his People.* So we read of their glorifying Christ, or speaking exceeding highly of him, Luke iv. 15. *And he taught*

taught in their Synagogues, being glorified of all. And how did they praiſe him with loud Voices, crying, *Hoſanna to the Son of* David, *Hoſanna in the Higheſt. Bleſſed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord*, a little before he was crucified! And after Chriſt's Aſcenſion, when the Apoſtles had heal'd the impotent Man, we are told, that *all Men glorified God for that which was done*, Acts iv. 21. When the *Gentiles* in *Antioch* of *Piſidia*, heard from *Paul* and *Barnabas*, that God would reject the *Jews*, and take the *Gentiles* to be his People in their Room, they were affected with this Goodneſs of God to the *Gentiles*, *and glorified the Word of the Lord:* But all that did ſo, were not true Believers; but only a certain elect Number of them; as is intimated in the Account we have of it; Acts xiii. 48. *And when the* Gentiles *heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal Life, believed.* So of old, the Children of *Iſrael*, at the *Red Sea*, *ſang God's Praiſe; but ſoon forgat his Works.* And the *Jews* in *Ezekiel*'s Time, *with their Mouth ſhewed much Love, while their Heart went after their Covetouſneſs.* And 'tis foretold of falſe Profeſſors, and real Enemies of Religion, that they ſhould ſhew a Forwardneſs to glorify God; Iſai lxvi. 5. *Hear ye the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word: Your Brethren that hated you, that caſt you out for my Name's Sake, ſaid, Let the Lord be glorified.*

'Tis no certain Sign, that a Perſon is graciouſly affected, if in the Midſt of his Hopes and Comforts, he is greatly affected with God's unmerited Mercy to him that is ſo unworthy, and ſeems greatly to extol and magnify free Grace. Thoſe that yet remain with unmortified Pride and Enmity againſt God, may, when they imagine that they have received extraordinary Kindneſs from God, cry out of their Unworthineſs, and magnify God's undeſerved Goodneſs to them, from no other Convictions of their Ill-deſervings, and from no higher Principle, than *Saul* had, who, while he yet remained with

with unſubdued Pride and Enmity againſt *David*, was brought, tho' a King, to acknowledge his Unworthineſs, and cry out, *I have played the Fool, I have erred exceedingly*, and with great Affection and Admiration, to magnify and extol *David*'s unmerited and unexampled Kindneſs to him, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 16,——19, and xxvi. 21. And from no higher Principle, than that from whence *Nebuchadnezzar* was affected with God's Diſpenſations, that he ſaw and was the Subject of, and praiſes, extols and honours the King of Heaven; and both he and *Darius*, in their high Affections, call upon all Nations to praiſe God. *Dan.* iii. 28, 29, 30; and iv. 1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37, and vi. 25, 26, 27.

XI. 'Tis no Sign that Affections are right, or that they are wrong, that they make Perſons that have them, exceeding confident, that what they experience is divine, and that they are in a good Eſtate.

It is an Argument with ſome, againſt Perſons, that they are deluded if they pretend to be aſſured of their good Eſtate, and to be carried beyond all Doubting of the Favour of God; ſuppoſing that there is no ſuch Thing to be expected in the Church of God, as a full and abſolute Aſſurance of Hope; unleſs it be in ſome very extraordinary Circumſtances; as in the Caſe of Martyrdom: Contrary to the Doctrine of Proteſtants, which has been maintained by the moſt celebrated Writers againſt the Papiſts; and contrary to the plaineſt Scripture Evidence. It is manifeſt that it was a common Thing for the Saints that we have a Hiſtory, or particular Account of in Scripture, to be aſſured. God in the plaineſt and moſt poſitive Manner, revealed and teſtified his ſpecial Favour to *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, *Jacob*, *Moſes*, *Daniel*, and others. *Job* often ſpeaks of his Sincerity and Uprightneſs with the greateſt imaginable Confidence and Aſſurance, often calling God to witneſs to it; and ſays plainly, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I ſhall ſee him for myſelf, and not another*,

ther, Job xix, 25, &c. *David*, throughout the Book of Pſalms, almoſt every where ſpeaks without any Heſitancy, and in the moſt poſitive Manner, of God as his God: glorying in him as his Portion and Heritage, his Rock and Confidence, his Shield, Salvation and high Tower, and the like. *Hezekiah* appeals to God, as one that knew that he had walked before him in Truth and with a perfect Heart, 2 *Kings* xx. 3. Jeſus Chriſt, in his dying Diſcourſe with his eleven Diſciples, in the 14th, 15th and 16th Chapters of *John*, (which was as it were Chriſt's laſt Will and Teſtament to his Diſciples, and to his whole Church) often declares his ſpecial and everlaſting Love to them, in the plaineſt and moſt poſitive Terms; and promiſes them a future Participation with him in his Glory, in the moſt abſolute Manner; and tells them at the ſame Time, that he does ſo, to the End that their Joy might be *full*; John xv. 11. *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you, that my Joy might remain in you, and that your Joy might be full.* See alſo at the Concluſion of his whole Diſcourſe, Chap. xvi. 33. *Theſe Things have I ſpoken unto you, that in me ye might have Peace. In the World ye ſhall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.* Chriſt was not afraid of ſpeaking too plainly and poſitively to them: He did not deſire to hold them in the leaſt Suſpenſe. And he concluded that laſt Diſcourſe of his, with a Prayer in their Preſence, wherein he ſpeaks poſitively to his Father of thoſe eleven Diſciples, as having all of them ſavingly known him, and believed in him, and received and kept his Word; and that they were not of the World; and that for their Sakes he ſanctified himſelf; and that his Will was that they ſhould be with him in his Glory: And tells his Father, that he ſpake theſe Things in his Prayer, to the End, that his Joy might be fulfilled in them, Verſe 13. By theſe Things it is evident, that 'tis agreeable to Chriſt's Deſigns, and the contrived Ordering and Diſpoſition Chriſt makes of Things in his Church, that there ſhould be ſufficient and abundant

Proviſion

Provision made, that his Saints might have full Assurance of their future Glory.

The Apostle *Paul*, through all his Epistles. speaks in an assured Strain; ever speaking positively of his special Relation to Christ, his Lord and Master and Redeemer, and his Interest in, and Expectation of the future Reward. It would be endless to take Notice of all Places that might be enumerated; I shall mention but three or four, Gal ii. 20. *Christ liveth in me, and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himself for me.* Phil. i. 21. *For me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain.* 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him, against that Day.* 2 Tim. i. 8. *I have fought a good Fight; I have finished my Course; I have kept the Faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that Day.*

And the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, and God's declared Ends in the Appointment and Constitution of Things in that Covenant, do plainly shew it to be God's Design, to make ample Provision for the Saints having an assured Hope of eternal Life, while living here upon Earth. For so are all Things ordered and contrived in that Covenant, that every Thing might be made sure on God's Part. *The Covenant is ordered in all Things, and sure:* The Promises are most full, and very often repeated, and various Ways exhibited; and there are many Witnesses, and many Seals; and God has confirmed his Promises with an Oath. And God's declared Design in all this is, that the Heirs of the Promises might have an undoubting Hope, and full Joy, in an Assurance of their future Glory. Heb. vi. 17, 18. *Wherein God willing, more abundantly to shew to the Heirs of Promise, the Immutability of his Counsel, confirmed it by an Oath; that by two immutable Things, in which it was impossible for God to Lie, we might have a strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the*

Hope

Hope ſet before us. But all this would be in vain, to any ſuch Purpoſe, as the Saints ſtrong Conſolation, and Hope of their obtaining future Glory, if their Intereſt in thoſe ſure Promiſes in ordinary Caſes, was not attainable. For God's Promiſes and Oaths, let them be as ſure as they will, can't give ſtrong Hope and Comfort to any particular Perſon, any further than he can know that thoſe Promiſes are made to him. And in vain is Proviſion made in Jeſus Chriſt, that Believers might be perfect as pertaining to the Conſcience, as is ſignified, *Heb.* ix. 9. if Aſſurance of Freedom from the Guilt of Sin is not attainable.

It further appears that Aſſurance is not only attainable in ſome very extraordinary Caſes, that *all* Chriſtians are directed to give all Diligence to make their Calling and Election ſure, and are told how they may do it, 2 *Pet.* i. 5.—8. And 'tis ſpoken of as a Thing very unbecoming of Chriſtians, and an Argument of ſomething very blameable in them, not to know whether Chriſt be in them or no; 2 Cor. xiii. 5. *Know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* And 'tis implied that it is an Argument of a very blameable Negligence in Chriſtians, if they practice Chriſtianity after ſuch a Manner as to remain uncertain of the Reward, in that 1 Cor. ix. 26. *I therefore ſo run, as not uncertainly.* And to add no more, it is manifeſt, that Chriſtians knowing their Intereſts in the ſaving Benefits of Chriſtianity, is a Thing ordinarily attainable, becauſe the Apoſtles tell us by what Means *Chriſtians* (and not only *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs)* were wont to know this; 1 Cor. ii. 12. *Now we have received, not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the Things that are freely given to us of God.* And 1 John ii. 3. *And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.* And Verſe 5. *Hereby know we that we are in him.* Chap. iii. 14. *We know that we are paſſed from Death to Life, becauſe we love the Brethren.* Verſe 12. *Hereby we know that we are of*

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the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him. Verse 24. *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit that he hath given us.* So Chap. iv. 13. and Chap. v. 2. and Verse 19.

Therefore it must needs be very unreasonable to determine, that Persons are Hypocrites, and their Affections wrong, because they seem to be out of Doubt of their own Salvation, and the Affections they are the Subjects of, seem to banish all Fears of Hell.

On the other Hand, it is no sufficient Reason to determine, that Men are Saints, and their Affections gracious, because the Affections they have are attended with an exceeding Confidence that their State is good, and their Affections divine.* Nothing can be certainly argued from their Confidence, how great and strong soever it seems to be. If we see a Man that boldly calls God his Father, and commonly speaks in the most bold, familiar and appropriating Language in Prayer, *My Father, my dear Redeemer, my sweet Saviour, my Beloved*, and the like,—and it is a common Thing for him to use the most confident Expressions before Men, about the Goodness of his State; such as, *I know certainly that God is my*

* "O Professor, look carefully to your Foundation: Be not high-"minded, but fear. You have, it may be, done and suffered many "Things in and for Religion; you have excellent Gifts and sweet "Comforts; a warm Zeal for God, and high Confidence of your "Integrity: All this may be right, for aught that I, or (it may be) "you know: But yet, it is possible it may be false also. You have "sometimes judged yourselves, and pronounced yourselves upright; "but remember your final Sentence is not yet pronounced by your "Judge. And what if God weigh you over again, in his more "equal Balance, and should say, *Mene, Tekel.* Thou art weighed "in the Balance, and art found wanting! What a confounded Man "wilt thou be, under such a Sentence! *Quæ splendent in Conspectu "Hominis, sordent in Conspectu Judicis*; Things that are highly "esteemed of Men, are an Abomination in the Sight of God: He "seeth not as Man seeth. Thy Heart may be false, and thou not "know it: Yea, it may be false, and thou strongly confident of its "Integrity." *Flavel's Touchstone of Sincerity*, Chap. ii. Sect. 5.

"Some Hypocrites are a great deal more confident than many "Saints." *Stodard's* Discourse on *the Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy*, pag. 128.

my Father; I know ſo ſurely as there is a God in Heaven, that he is my God; I know I ſhall go to Heaven, as well as if I were there; I know that God is now manifeſting himſelf to my Soul, and is now ſmiling upon me: And ſeems to have done forever with any Enquiry or Examination into his State, as a Thing ſufficiently known, and out of Doubt, and to contemn all that ſo much as intimate or ſuggeſt, that there is ſome Reaſon to Doubt or Fear whether all is right; ſuch Things are no Signs at all that it is indeed ſo as he is confident it is.† Such an over-bearing, high-handed and violent Sort of Confidence as this, ſo affecting to declare itſelf with a moſt glaring Show, in the Sight of Men, which is to be ſeen in many, has not the Countenance of a true Chriſtian Aſſurance: It favours more of the Spirit of the Phariſees, who never doubted but that they were Saints, and the moſt eminent of Saints, and were bold to go to God, and come up near to him, and lift up their Eyes, and thank him for the great Diſtinction he had made between them and other Men; and when Chriſt intimated that they were blind and graceleſs, deſpiſed the Suggeſtion; John ix. 40. *And ſome of the Phariſees which were with him, heard theſe Words, and ſaid unto him, Are we blind alſo?* If they had more of the Spirit of the *Publican*, with their Confidence, who in a Senſe of his exceeding Unworthineſs, ſtood afar off, and durſt not ſo much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but ſmote on his Breaſt, and cried out of himſelf as a Sinner, their Confidence

† "Doth the Work of Faith in ſome Believers, bear upon its top "Branches, the full ripe Fruits of a bleſſed Aſſurance? Lo, what "ſtrong Confidence, and high-built Perſuaſions of an Intereſt in "God, have ſometimes been found in unſactified Ones. Yea, ſo "ſtrong may this falſe Aſſurance be, that they dare boldly venture "to go to the Judgment Seat of God, and there defend it. Doth "the Spirit of God fill the Heart of the aſſured Believer with Joy "unſpeakable and full of Glory, giving them, through Faith, a "Prelibation or Foretaſte of Heaven itſelf, in thoſe firſt Fruits of it? "How near to this comes what the Apoſtle ſuppoſes may be found "in Apoſtates!" *Flavel's Huſbandry ſpiritualized*, Chap. 12.

Confidence would have more of the Aspect of the Confidence of one that humbly trusts and hopes in Christ, and has no Confidence in himself.

If we do but consider what the Hearts of natural Men are, what Principles they are under the Dominion of, what Blindness and Deceit, what Self-Flattery, Self-Exaltation and Self-Confidence reigns there, we need not at all wonder that their high Opinion of themselves, and Confidence of their happy Circumstances, be as high and strong as Mountains, and as violent as a Tempest, when once Conscience is blinded, and Convictions kill'd, with false, high Affections, and those forementioned Principles let loose, fed up and prompted by false Joys and Comforts, excited by some pleasing Imaginations impress'd by *Satan*, transforming himself into an Angel of Light.

When once a Hypocrite is thus establish'd in a false Hope, he has not those Things to cause him to call his Hope in Question, that oftentimes are the Occasion of the Doubting of true Saints; as *First*, He has that cautious Spirit, that great Sense of the vast Importance of a sure Foundation, and that Dread of being deceived. The Comforts of the true Saints increase Awakening and Caution, and a lively Sense how great a Thing it is to appear before an infinitely holy, just and omniscient Judge. But false Comforts put an End to these Things, and dreadfully stupify the Mind. *Secondly*, The Hypocrite has not the Knowledge of his own Blindness, and the Deceitfulness of his own Heart, and that mean Opinion of his own Understanding, that the true Saint has. Those that are deluded with false Discoveries and Affections, are evermore highly conceited of their Light and Understanding. *Thirdly*, The Devil don't assault the Hope of the Hypocrite, as he does the Hope of a true Saint. The Devil is a great Enemy to a true Christian Hope, not only because it tends greatly to the Comfort of him that hath it, but also because it is a Thing of a holy, heavenly Nature, greatly tending to promote and

cherish

cheriſh Grace in the Heart, and a great Incentive to Strictneſs and Diligence in the chriſtian Life. But he is no Enemy to the Hope of a Hypocrite, which above all Things eſtabliſhes his Intereſt in him that has it. A Hypocrite may retain his Hope without Oppoſition, as long as he lives, the Devil never diſturbing it, nor attempting to diſturb it. But there is perhaps no true Chriſtian but what has his Hope aſſaul ed by him. *Satan* aſſaulted Chriſt himſelf, upon this, whether he were the Son of God or no: And the Servant is not above his Maſter, nor the Diſciple above his Lord; 'tis enough for the Diſciple, that is moſt privileged in this World, to be as his Maſter. *Fourthly*, He who has a falſe Hope, has not that Sight of his own Corruptions, which the Saint has. A true Chriſtian has ten Times ſo much to do with his Heart, and its Corruptions, as an Hypocrite: And the Sins of his Heart and Practice, appear to him in their Blackneſs; they look dreadful; and it often appears a very myſterious Thing, that any Grace can be conſiſtent with ſuch Corruption, or ſhould be in ſuch a Heart. But a falſe Hope hides Corruption, covers it all over, and the Hypocrite looks clean and bright in his own Eyes.

There are two Sorts of Hypocrites: one that are deceived with their outward Morality and external Religion; many of which are profeſs'd *Arminians*, in the Doctrine of Juſtification: And the other, are thoſe that are deceived with falſe Diſcoveries and Elevations; which often cry down Works, and Men's own Righteouſneſs, and talk much of free Grace; but at the ſame Time make a Righteouſneſs of their Diſcoveries, and of their Humiliation, and exalt themſelves to Heaven with them. Theſe two Kinds of Hypocrites Mr. *Shepard*, in his Expoſition of the Parable of the ten Virgins, diſtinguiſhes by the Names of *legal* and *evangelical* Hypocrites; and often ſpeaks of the latter as the worſt. And 'tis evident, that the latter are commonly by far the moſt confident in their Hope, and with the moſt Difficulty brought

brought off from it: I have scarcely known the Instance of such an one, in my Life, that has been undeceived. The chief Grounds of the Confidence of many of them, are the very same Kind of Impulses and supposed Revelations, (sometimes with Texts of Scripture, and sometimes without) that so many of late have had concerning future Events; calling these Impulses about their good Estate, the Witness of the Spirit; intirely misunderstanding the Nature of the Witness of the Spirit, as I shall shew hereafter. Those that have had Visions and Impulses about other Things, it has generally been to reveal such Things as they are desirous and fond of: And no wonder, that Persons who give heed to such Things, have same Sort of Visions or Impressions about their own eternal Salvation, to reveal to them that their Sins are forgiven them, that their Names are written in the Book of Life, that they are in high Favour with God, *&c.* and especially when they earnestly seek, expect and wait for Evidence of their Election and Salvation this Way, as the surest and most glorious Evidence of it. Neither is it any Wonder, that when they have such a supposed Revelation of their good Estate, it raises in them the highest Degree of Confidence of it. 'Tis found by abundant Experience, that those who are led away by Impulses and imagined Revelations, are extremely confident: They suppose that the great Jehovah has declared these and those Things to them; and having his immediate Testimony, a strong Confidence is the highest Vertue. Hence they are bold to say, *I know this or that*;—*I know certainly*;---*I am as sure as that I have a Being*, and the like: And they despise all Argument and Enquiry in the Case. And above all Things else, 'tis easy to be accounted for, that Impressions and Impulses about that which is so pleasing, so suiting their Self-Love and Pride, as their being the dear Children of God, distinguished from most in the World in his Favour, should make them strongly confident: Especially when with

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their Impulſes and Revelations they have high Affections, which they take to be the moſt eminent Exerciſes of Grace. I have known of ſeveral Perſons, that have had a fond Deſire of ſomething of a temporal Nature, through a violent Paſſion that has poſſeſſed them, and they have been earneſtly purſuing the Thing they have deſired ſhould come to paſs, and have met with great Difficulty and many Diſcouragements in it, but at laſt have had an Impreſſion or ſuppoſed Revelation that they ſhould obtain what they ſought: and they have looked upon it as a ſure Promiſe from the moſt High, which has made them moſt ridiculouſly confident, againſt all Manner of Reaſon to convince them to contrary, and all Events working againſt them. And there is nothing hinders, but that Perſons who are ſeeking their Salvation, may be deceived by the like deluſive Impreſſions, and be made confident of that, the ſame Way.

The Confidence of many of this Sort of Hypocrites, that Mr. *Shepard* calls *evangelical Hypocrites*, is like the Confidence of ſome mad Men, who think they are Kings: They will maintain it againſt all Manner of Reaſon and Evidence. And in one Senſe, it is much more immoveable than a truly gracious Aſſurance; a true Aſſurance is not upheld, but by the Soul's being kept in a holy Frame, and Grace maintained in lively Exerciſe. If the Actings of Grace do much decay in the Chriſtian, and he falls into a lifeleſs Frame, he loſes his Aſſurance: But this Kind of Confidence of Hypocrites will not be ſhaken by Sin: They, (at leaſt ſome of them) will maintain their Boldneſs in their Hope, in the moſt corrupt Frames and wicked Ways: Which is a ſure Evidence of their Deluſion.* And

* Mr. *Shepard* ſpeaks of it, as a *preſumptuous Peace, that is not interrupted and broke by evil Works.* And ſays, that the *Spirit will ſigh, and not ſing in that Boſom, whence corrupt Diſpoſitions and Paſſions break out.* And that *though Men in ſuch Frames may ſeem to maintain the Conſolation of the Spirit, and not ſuſpect their Hypocriſy, under Pretence of truſting the Lord's Mercy; yet they cannot avoid the Condemnation of the Word.* Parable of the ten Virgins, Part I. p. 139.

Dr.

And here I can't but observe, that there are certain Doctrines often preached to the People, which need to be delivered with more Caution and Explanation than they frequently are; for as they are by many understood, they tend greatly to establish this Delusion and false Confidence of Hypocrites. The Doctrines I speak of are those of *Christians living by Faith, not by Sight*; *their giving Glory to God, by trusting him in the Dark*; *living upon Christ, and not upon Experiences*; *not making their good Frames the Foundation of their Faith*: Which are excellent and important Doctrines indeed, rightly understood, but corrupt and destructive, as many understand them. The Scripture speaks of living or walking by Faith, and not by Sight, in no other Way than these, *viz.* a being governed by a Respect to eternal Things, that are the Objects of Faith, and are not seen; and not by a Respect to temporal Things, which are seen; and believing Things revealed that we never saw with bodily Eyes; and also living by Faith in the Promise of future Things; without yet seeing or enjoying the Things promised, or knowing the Way how they can be fulfilled. This will be easily evident to any one that looks over the Scriptures which speak of *Faith* in Opposition to *Sight*; as 2 *Cor.* iv. 18, and v. 7. *Heb.* xi. 1, 8, 13, 17, 27, 29. *Rom.* viii. 24. *John* xx. 29. But this Doctrine, as it is understood by many, is, that Christians ought firmly to believe and trust in Christ, without spiritual Sight or Light, and altho' they are in a dark dead Frame, and, for the present, have no spiritual Experiences or Discoveries. And it is truly the Duty of those who are thus in Darkness, to come out of Darkness, into Light, and

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Dr. *Ames* speaks of it as a Thing, by which the Peace of a wicked Man may be distinguished from the Peace of a godly Man, "that "the Peace of a wicked Man continues, whether he performs the "Duties of Piety and Righteousness, or no; provided those Crimes "are avoided that appear horrid to Nature itself." Cases of Conscience, Lib. III. Chap. 7.

and believe. But that they ſhould confidently believe and truſt, while they yet remain without ſpiritual Light or Sight, is an antiſcriptural and abſurd Doctrine. The Scripture is ignorant of any ſuch Faith in Chriſt of the Operation of God, that is not founded in a ſpiritual Sight of Chriſt: That believing on Chriſt, which accompanies a Title to everlaſting Life, is a *ſeeing the Son, and believing on him*, John vi. 40. True Faith in Chriſtis never exerciſed, any further than Perſons *behold as in a Glaſs, the Glory of the Lord*, and have *the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt*; 2 Cor. xviii. and iv. 6. They into whoſe Minds *the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, does not ſhine: They believe not*; 2 Cor. iv. 4. That Faith, which is without ſpiritual Light, is not the Faith of the Children of the Light, and of the Day; but the Preſumption of the Children of Darkneſs. And therefore to preſs and urge Men to believe, without any ſpiritual Light or Sight, tends greatly to help forward the Deluſions of the Prince of Darkneſs. Men not only can't exerciſe Faith without ſome ſpiritual Light, but they can exerciſe Faith only juſt in ſuch Proportion as they have ſpiritual Light. Men will truſt in God no further than they know him: And they can't be in the Exerciſe of Faith in him one Ace further than they have a Sight of his Fulneſs and Faithfulneſs *in Exerciſe*. Nor can they have the Exerciſe of Truſt in God, any further than they are in a *gracious Frame*. They that are in a dead carnal Frame, doubtleſs ought to truſt in God; becauſe that would be the ſame Thing as coming out of their bad Frame, and turning to God: But to exhort Men confidently to truſt in God, and ſo hold up their Hope and Peace, tho' they are not in a gracious Frame, and continue ſtill to be ſo, is the ſame Thing in Effect, as to exhort them confidently to truſt in God, but not with a gracious Truſt: And what is that but a wicked Preſumption? It is juſt ſo impoſſible for Men to have a ſtrong or lively truſt in God, when they have no lively Exerciſes

Exerciſes of Grace, or ſenſible chriſtian Experiences, as it is for them to be in the lively Exerciſes of Grace, without the Exerciſes of Grace.

'Tis true, that it is the Duty of God's People to truſt in him, when in Darkneſs, and tho' they remain ſtill in Darkneſs, in that Senſe, that they ought to truſt in God when the Aſpects of his Providence are dark, and look as though God had forſaken them, and did not hear their Prayers, and many Clouds gather, and many Enemies ſurround them, with a formidable Aſpect, threatning to ſwallow them up, and all Events of Providence ſeem to be againſt them, all Circumſtances ſeem to render the Promiſes of God difficult to be fullfil'd, and God muſt be truſted out of Sight, *i. e.* when we can't ſee which Way it is poſſible for him to fullfil his Word, every Thing but God's meer Word makes it look unlikely; ſo that if Perſons believe, they muſt Hope againſt Hope. Thus the ancient *Patriarchs*, and *Job*, and the Pſalmiſt, and *Jeremiah*, *Daniel*, *Shadrach*, *Meſhech*, and *Adednego*, and the Apoſtle *Paul*, gave Glory to God, by truſting in God in Darkneſs. And we have many Inſtances of ſuch a glorious victorious Faith in the Eleventh of the *Hebrews*. But how different a Thing is this, from truſting in God without ſpiritual Sight, and being at the ſame Time in a dead and carnal Frame!

There is alſo ſuch a Thing as ſpiritual Light's being let into the Soul in one Way, when it is not in another; and ſo there is ſuch a Thing as the Saints truſting in God, and alſo knowing their good Eſtate, when they are deſtitute of ſome Kinds of Experience. As for Inſtance, they may have clear Views of God's Sufficiency and Faithfulneſs, and ſo confidently truſt in him, and know that they are his Children; and at the ſame Time, not have thoſe clear and ſweet Ideas of his Love, as at other Times: For it was thus with Chriſt himſelf in his laſt Paſſion. And they may have Views of much of God's Sovereignty, Holineſs and Allſufficiency, enabling them quietly to ſubmit to him, and exerciſe a ſweet and

moſt encouraging Hope in God's Fulneſs, when they are not ſatisfied of their own good Eſtate. But how different Things are theſe, from confidently truſting in God, without ſpiritual Light or Experience!

Thoſe that thus inſiſt on Perſons living by Faith, when they have no Experience, and are in very bad Frames, are alſo very abſurd in their Notions of Faith. What they mean by Faith is, believing that they are in a good Eſtate. Hence they count it a dreadful Sin for them to doubt of their State, whatever Frames they are in, and whatever wicked Things they do, becauſe 'tis the great and heinous Sin of Unbelief; and he is the beſt Man, and puts moſt Honour upon God, that maintains his Hope of his good Eſtate the moſt confidently and immoveably, when he has the leaſt Light or Experience; that is to ſay, when he is in the worſt and wickedeſt Frame and Way; becauſe, forſooth, that is a Sign that he is ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God, and againſt Hope believes in Hope. But what Bible do they learn this Notion of Faith out of, that it is a Man's confidently believing that he is in a good Eſtate?* If this be Faith, the Phariſees had Faith in an eminent Degree; ſome of which, Chriſt teaches, committed the upardonable Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. The Scripture repreſents Faith, as that by which Men are *brought into* a good Eſtate; and therefore it can't be the ſame Thing, as believing that they *are already* in a good Eſtate. To ſuppoſe

* "Men don't know that they are godly, by believing that they "are godly. We know many Things by Faith, Heb. xi. 3. *By Faith "we underſtand that the Worlds were made by the Word of God.* Faith "is the Evidence of Things not ſeen; Heb. xi. 1. Thus Men know "the Trinity of Perſons of the Godhead; that Jeſus Chriſt is the "Son of God; that he that believes in him will have eternal Life; "the Reſurrection of the Dead. And if God ſhould tell a Saint "that he hath Grace, he might know it by believing the Word of "God. But it is not this Way, that godly Men do know that they "have Grace. It is not revealed in the Word; and the Spirit of "God doth not teſtify it to particular Perſons." *Stoddard*'s Nature of ſaving Converſion, p. 83, 84.

suppose that Faith consists in Persons believing that they are in a good Estate, is in Effect the same Thing, as to suppose that Faith consists in a Person's believing that he has Faith, or in believing that he believes.

Indeed Persons doubting of their good Estate, may in several Respects *arise from* Unbelief, It may be from Unbelief, or because they have so little Faith, that they have so little *Evidence* of their good Estate: If they had more Experience of the Actings of Faith, and so more Experience of the Exercise of Grace, they would have clearer Evidence that their State was good; and so their Doubts would be removed. And then their doubting of their State may be from Unbelief thus, When tho' there be many Things that are good Evidences of a Work of Grace in them, yet they doubt very much whether they are really in a State of Favour with God, because it is *they*, those that are so unworthy, and have done so much to provoke God to Anger against them. Their Doubts in such a Case arise from Unbelief, as they arise from want of a sufficient Sense *of*, and Reliance *on* the infinite Riches of God's Grace, and the Sufficiency of Christ for the Chief of Sinners. They may also be from Unbelief, when they doubt of their State, because of the Mystery of God's Dealings with them: They are not able to reconcile such Dispensations with God's Favour to them: Or when they doubt whether they have any Interest in the Promises, because the Promises from the Aspects of Providence, appear so unlikely to be fulfilled; the Difficulties that are in the Way, are so many and great. Such Doubting arises from want of Dependance upon God's Almighty Power, and his Knowledge and Wisdom, as infinitely above theirs. But yet, in such Persons, their Unbelief, and their doubting of their State, are not the same Thing; tho' one arises from the other.

Persons may be greatly to blame for doubting of their State, on such Grounds as these last mentioned; and they may be to blame, that they have no more Grace, and no more of the present Exercises and Experiences

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of it, to be an Evidence to them of the Goodneſs of their State: Men are doubtleſs to blame for being in a dead carnal Frame; but when they are in ſuch a Frame; and have no ſenſible Experience of the Exerciſes of Grace, but on the contrary, are very much under the Prevalence of their Luſts, and an unchriſtian Spirit, they are not to blame for doubting of their State. 'Tis as impoſſible, in the Nature of Things, that a holy and chriſtian Hope, ſhould be kept alive, in its Clearneſs and Strength, in ſuch Circumſtances, as it is to keep the Light in the Room, when the Candle is put out; or to maintain the bright Sun-ſhine in the Air, when the Sun is gone down. Diſtant Experiences, when darken'd by preſent prevailing Luſt and Corruption, will never keep alive a gracious Confidence and Aſſurance; but that ſickens and decays upon it, as neceſſarily as a little Child by repeated Blows on the Head with the Hammer. Nor is it at all to be lamented, that Perſons doubt of their State in ſuch Circumſtances; but on the Contrary, 'tis deſirable and every Way beſt that they ſhould. 'Tis agreeable to that wiſe and merciful Conſtitution of Things, which God hath eſtabliſhed, that it ſhould be ſo. For ſo hath God contrived and conſtituted Things, in his Diſpenſations towards his own People, that when their *Love* decays, and the Exerciſes of it fail, or become weak, *Fear* ſhould ariſe: for then they need it to reſtrain them from Sin, and to excite them to care for the Good of their Souls, and ſo to ſtir them up to Watchfulneſs and Diligence in Religion: But God hath ſo order'd that when Love riſes, and is in vigorous Exerciſe, then Fear ſhould vaniſh, and be driven away; for then they need it not; having a higher and more excellent Principle in Exerciſe, to reſtrain them from Sin, and ſtir them up to their Duty. There are no other Principles, which human Nature is under the Influence of, that will ever make Men conſcientious, but one of theſe two, *Fear* or *Love:* And therefore if one of theſe ſhould not prevail, as the other

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decay'd, God's People when fallen into dead and carnal Frames, when Love is asleep, would be lamentably exposed indeed. And therefore God has wisely ordained, that these two opposite Principles of Love and Fear, should rise and fall, like the two opposite Scales of a Ballance; when one rises, the other sinks. As Light and Darkness, necessarily and unavoidably succeed each other; if Light prevails, so much does Darkness cease, and no more; and if Light decays, so much does Darkness prevail; so it is in the Heart of a Child of God: If divine Love decays and falls asleep, and Lust prevails, the Light and Joy of Hope goes out, and dark Fear and Doubting arises; and if on the Contrary, divine Love prevails, and comes into lively Exercise, this brings in the Brightness of Hope, and drives away black Lust, and Fear with it. Love is the *Spirit of Adoption*, or the Child-like Principle; if that Slumbers, Men fall under Fear, which is the *Spirit of Bondage*, or the servile Principles: And so on the contrary. And if it be so, that Love or the Spirit of Adoption, be carried to a great Height, it quite drives away all Fear, and gives full Assurance; agreeable to that of the Apostle, 1 John iv. 18. *There is no Fear in Love, but perfect Love casts out Fear.* These two opposite Principles of Lust and holy Love, bring Hope and Fear into the Hearts of God's Children, in Proportion as they prevail; that is, when left to their own natural Influence, without something adventitious, or accidental intervening; as the Distemper of Melancholly, doctrinal Ignorance, Prejudices of Education, wrong Instruction, false Principles, peculiar Temptations, *&c.*

Fear is cast out by the Spirit of God, no other Way than by the prevailing of Love: Nor is Assurance ever maintained by his Spirit, when Love is asleep. At such a Time, in vain is all the Saint's Self-Examinations, and poring on past Experiences, in order to establish his Peace, and get Assurance. For it is contrary to the Nature of Things, as God hath constituted them, that he should have Assurance at such a Time. They

They therefore, do directly thwart God's wise and gracious Constitution of Things, who exhort others to be confident in their Hope, when in dead Frames; under a Notion of *living by Faith*, and *not by Sight*, and *trusting God in the Dark*, and *living upon Christ, and not upon Experiences*; and warn them not to doubt of their good Estate, lest they should be guilty of the dreadful Sin of Unbelief. And it has a direct Tendency to establish the most presumptuous Hypocrites, and to prevent their ever calling their State in Question, how much soever Wickedness rages, and reigns in their Hearts, and prevails in their Lives; under a Notion of honouring God, by *hoping against Hope*, and confidently trusting in God, when Things look very dark. And doubtless vast has been the Mischief, that has been done this Way.

Persons can't be said to forsake Christ, and live on their Experiences of the Exercises of Grace, merely because they take them and use them as Evidences of Grace; for there are no other Evidences that they can or ought to take. But then may Persons be said to live upon their Experiences, when they make a Righteousness of them; and instead of keeping their Eye on God's Glory, and Christ's Excellency, they turn their Eyes off these Objects without them, on to themselves, to entertain their Minds, by viewing their own Attainments, and high Experiences, and the great Things they have met with, and are bright and beautiful in their own Eyes, and are rich and encreased with Goods, in their own Apprehensions, and think that God has as admiring an Esteem of them, on the same Account, as they have of themselves: This is living on Experiences, and not on Christ; and is more abominable in the Sight of God, than the gross Immoralities of those who make no Pretences to Religion. But this is a far different Thing from a mere improving Experiences as Evidences of an Interest in a glorious Redeemer.

But to return from this Digression, I would mention one Thing more under the general Head that I am upon.

XII.

XII. Nothing can be certainly concluded concerning the Nature of religious Affections, that any are the Subjects of, from this, that the outward Manifestations of them, and the Relation Persons give of them, are very affecting and pleasing to the truly Godly, and such as greatly gain their Charity, and win their Hearts.

The true Saints have not such a Spirit of discerning, that they can certainly determine who are godly, and who are not. For tho' they know experimentally what true Religion is, in the internal Exercises of it; yet these are what they can neither feel or see, in the Heart of another.* There is nothing in others, that comes within their View, but outward Manifestations and Appearances; but the Scripture plainly intimates, that this Way of judging what is in Men by outward Appearances, is at best uncertain, and liable to Deceit; 1 Sam. xvi. 7. *The Lord seeth not as Man seeth; for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart.* Isai. xi. 3. *He shall not judge after the Sight of his Eyes, neither reprove after the Hearing of his Ears.*† They commonly are but poor Judges, and dangerous Counsellors in Soul Cases, who are quick and peremptory in determining

* "Men may have the Knowledge of their own Conversion: The "Knowledge that other Men have of it is uncertain; because no Man "can look into the Heart of another, and see the Workings of Grace "there." *Stoddard*'s Nat. of saving Con. Chap. 15, at the Beginning.

† Mr. *Stoddard* observes, That *all visible Signs are common to converted and unconverted Men*; and a *Relation of Experiences* among the rest. *Appeal to the Learned*, p. 75.

"O how hard is it for the Eye of Man to discern betwixt Chaff "and Wheat! And how many upright Hearts are now censured, "whom God will clear! How many false Hearts are now approved, "whom God will condemn! Men ordinarily have no convictive "Proofs, but only probable Symptoms; which at most beget but a "conjectural Knowledge of another's State. And they that shall "peremptorily judge either Way, may possibly wrong the Generation of the Upright, or on the other Side, absolve and justify the "Wicked. And truly, considering what hath been said, 'tis no "Wonder that dangerous Mistakes are so frequently made in this "Matter." *Flavel*'s Husb. spir. Chap. 12.

determining Perſons States, vaunting themſelves in their extraordinary Faculty of diſcerning and diſtinguiſhing, in theſe great Affairs; as tho' all was open and clear to them. They betray one of theſe three Things; either that they have had but little Experience, or are Perſons of a weak Judgment; or that they have a great Degree of Pride and Self-Confidence, and ſo ignorant of themſelves. Wiſe and experienced Men will proceed with great Caution in ſuch an Affair.

When there are many probable Appearances of Piety in others, it is the Duty of the Saints to receive them cordially into their Charity, and to love them and rejoice in them, as their Brethren in Chriſt Jeſus. But yet the beſt of Men may be deceived, when the Appearances ſeem to them exceeding fair and bright, even ſo as entirely to gain their Charity, and conquer their Hearts. It has been a common Thing in the Church of God, for ſuch bright Profeſſors, that are received as eminent Saints, among the Saints, to fall away and come to nothing.* And this we need not wonder at, if we conder the Things that have been already obſerved; what Things it has been ſhewn, may appear in Men who are altogether graceleſs. Nothing hinders but that all theſe Things

* "Be not offended, if you ſee great Cedars fall, Stars fall from "Heaven, great Profeſſors die and decay: Do not think they be all "ſuch: Do not think that the Elect ſhall fall. Truly, ſome are ſuch, "that when they fall, one would think a Man truly ſanctified might "fall away, as the *Arminians* think. 1 John ii. 19. *They were not of "us.* I ſpeak this becauſe the Lord is ſhaking; and I look for great "Apoſtacies: For God is trying all his Friends, thro' all the Chriſtian World. In *Germany* what Profeſſion was there! Who would "have thought it? The Lord who delights to manifeſt that openly, "which was hid ſecretly, ſends a Sword and they fall." *Shepard's* Parab. Part I. p. 118, 119.

"The Saints may approve thee, and God condemn thee; Rev. iii. "1. *Thou haſt a Name that thou liveſt, and art dead.* Men may ſay, "there is a true *Nathanael*; and God may ſay, There is a ſelf-cozening *Phariſee.*——Reader, thou haſt heard of *Judas*, and *Demas*, "of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, once renown'd "and famous Profeſſors; and thou haſt heard how they proved at laſt." *Flavel's* Touchſtone of Sincerity, Chap. 2. Sect. 5.

Things may meet together in Men, and yet they be without a Spark of Grace in their Hearts. They may have religious Affections of many Kinds together; they may have a Sort of Affection towards God, that bears a great Resemblance of dear Love to him; and so a Kind of Love to the Brethren, and great Appearances of Admiration of God's Perfections and Works, and Sorrow for Sin, and Reverence, Submission, Self-Abasement, Gratitude, Joy, religious Longings, and Zeal for the Interest of Religion and the Good of Souls. And these Affections may come after great Awakenings and Convictions of Conscience; and there may be great Appearances of a Work of Humiliation; and counterfeit Love and Joy, and other Affections may seem to follow these, and one another, just in the same Order, that is commonly observable in the holy Affections of true Converts. And these religious Affections may be carried to a great Height, and may cause Abundance of Tears, yea, may overcome the Nature of those who are the Subjects of them, and may make them affectionate, and fervent, and fluent in speaking of the Things of God, and dispose them to be abundant in it; and may be attended with many sweet Texts of Scripture, and precious Promises, brought with great Impression on their Minds; and may dispose them with their Mouths to praise and glorify God, in a very ardent Manner, and fervently to call upon others to praise him, crying out of their Unworthiness, and extolling free Grace. And may, moreover, dispose them to abound in the external Duties of Religion, such as Prayer, hearing the Word preached, Singing, and religious Conference; and these Things attended with a great Resemblance of a christian Assurance, in its greatest Height, when the Saints mount on Eagles Wings, above all Darkness and Doubting. I think it has been made plain, that there may be all these Things, and yet there be nothing more than the common Influences of the Spirit of God, join'd with the Delusions of *Satan*; and the

wicked

wicked and deceitful Heart. To which I may add, that all these Things may be attended with a sweet natural Temper, and a good doctrinal Knowledge of Religion, and a long Acquaintance with the Saints Way of talking, and of expressing their Affections and Experiences, and a natural Ability and Subtilty in accommodating their Expressions and Manner of speaking to the Dispositions and Notions of the Hearers, and a taking Decency of Expression and Behaviour, formed by a good Education. How great therefore may the Resemblance be, as to all outward Expressions and Appearances, between an Hypocrite and a true Saint! Doubtless it is the glorious Prerogative of the omniscient God, as the great Searcher of Hearts, to be able well to separate between Sheep and Goats. And what an indecent, Self-Exaltation and Arrogance is it, in poor fallible dark Mortals, to pretend that they can determine and know, who are really sincere and upright before God, and who are not!

Many seem to lay great Weight on that, and to suppose it to be what may determine them with Respect to others real Piety, when they not only tell a plausible Story, but when, in giving an Account of their Experiences, they make such a Representation, and speak after such a Manner, that they *feel* their Talk; that is to say, when their Talk seems to harmonize with their own Experience, and their Hearts are touched and affected and delighted, by what they hear them say, and drawn out by it, in dear Love to them. But there is not that Certainty in such Things, and that full Dependance to be had upon them, which many imagine. A true Saint greatly delights in Holiness: It is a most beautiful Thing in his Eyes; and God's Work, in savingly renewing and making holy and happy, a poor, and before perishing Soul, appears to him a most glorious Work. No wonder therefore, that his Heart is touch'd, and greatly affected, when he hears another give a probable Account of this Work, wrought on his own Heart,

and

and when he ſees in him probable Appearances of Holineſs; whether thoſe pleaſing Appearances have any Thing real to anſwer them, or no. And if he uſes the ſame Words, which are commonly made uſe of, to expreſs the Affections of true Saints, and tells of many Things following one another, in an Order, agreeable to the Method of the Experience of him that hears him, and alſo ſpeaks freely and boldly, and with an Air of Aſſurance: No wonder that the other thinks his Experiences harmonize with his own. And if beſides all this, in giving his Relation, he ſpeaks with much Affection; and above all, if in ſpeaking, he ſeems to ſhew much Affection to him, to whom he ſpeaks, ſuch an Affection as the *Galatians* did to the Apoſtle *Paul*; theſe Things will naturally have a powerful Influence, to affect and draw his Hearer's Heart, and open wide the Doors of his Charity towards him. *David* ſpeaks as one who had felt *Ahithophel*'s Talk, and had once a ſweet Savour and Reliſh of it. And therefore exceeding great was his Surpriſe and Diſappointment, when he fell; it was almoſt too much for him. Pſal. lv. 12, 13, 14. *It was not an Enemy—then I could have borne it,—but it was thou, a Man, mine Equal, my Guide, and my Acquaintance; we took ſweet Counſel together, and walked unto the Houſe of God in Company.*

It is with Profeſſors of Religion, eſpecially ſuch as become ſo in a Time of out-pouring of the Spirit of God, as it is with the Bloſſoms in the Spring;* there are vaſt Numbers of them upon the Trees, which all look fair and promiſing; but yet very many of them never come to any Thing. And many of thoſe, that in a little Time wither up, and drop off, and rot under the Trees; yet for a while, look as beautiful and gay as others;

* A Time of out-pouring of the Spirit of God, reviving of Religion, and producing the pleaſant Appearances of it, in new Converts, is in Scripture compared to this very Thing, *viz.* the Spring Seaſon, when the benign Influences of the Heaven's, cauſe the Bloſſoms to put forth. *Cant.* ii. 11, 12.

others; and not only so, but smell sweet, and send forth a pleasant Odour: So that we can't, by any of our Senses, certainly distinguish those Blossoms which have in them that secret Vertue, which will afterwards appear in the Fruit, and that inward Solidity and Strength which shall enable them to bear, and cause them to be perfected by the hot Summer Sun, that will dry up the others. 'Tis the mature Fruit which comes afterwards, and not the beautiful Colours and Smell of the Blossom, that we must judge by. So new Converts, (professedly so) in their Talk about Things of Religion, may appear fair, and be very savoury, and the Saints may think they talk feelingly. They may relish their Talk, and imagine they perceive a divine Savour in it; and yet all may come to nothing.

'Tis strange how hardly Men are brought to be contented with the Rules and Directions Christ has given them, but they must needs go by other Rules, of their own inventing, that seem to them wiser and better. I know of no Directions or Counsels which Christ ever delivered more plainly, than the Rules he has given us, to guide us in our judging of others Sincerity; *viz.* that we should judge of the Tree chiefly by the Fruit: But yet this won't do; but other Ways are found out, which are imagined to be more distinguishing and certain. And woful have been the mischievous Consequences, of this arrogant setting up Men's Wisdom above the Wisdom of Christ. I believe many Saints have gone much out of the Way of Christ's Word, in this Respect: And some of them have been chastised with Whips, and (I had almost said) Scorpions, to bring them back again. But many Things which have lately appeared, and do now appear, may convince, that ordinarily, those who have gone furthest this Way, that have been most highly conceited of their Faculty of discerning, and have appeared most forward, peremptorily and suddenly to determine the State of Men's Souls, have been Hypocrites, who have known nothing of true Religion.

In

In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, it is said, Matth. xiii. 26. *When the Blade was sprung up, and brought forth Fruit, then appeared the Tares also.* And tho' the Tares were not discerned, nor distinguishable from the Wheat, *'till then*, as Mr. *Flavel* observes,* who mentions it as an Observation of *Jerom*'s, That *Wheat and Tares are so much alike, 'till the Blade of the Wheat comes to bring forth the Ear, that 'tis next to impossible to distinguish them.* And then Mr. *Flavel* adds, "How difficult soever it be to discern the Difference "between Wheat and Tares; yet doubtless the Eye "of Sense can much easier discriminate them, than "the most quick and piercing Eye of Man, can discern "the Difference between special and common Grace. "For all saving Graces in the Saints, have their Coun- "terfeits in Hypocrites; there are similar Works in those, "which a spiritual and very judicious Eye may easily "mistake, for the saving and genuine Effects of a sancti- "fying Spirit."

As 'tis the Ear or the Fruit which distinguishes the Wheat from the Tares, so this is the true *Shibboleth*, that he who stands as Judge at the Passages of *Jordan*, makes use of to distinguish those that shall pass over *Jordan* into the true *Canaan*, from those that should be slain at the Passages. For the Hebrew Word *Shibboleth*, signifies an Ear of Corn. And perhaps the more full Pronunciation of *Jepthah*'s Friends, *Shibboleth*, may represent a full Ear with Fruit in it, typifying the Fruits of the Friends of Christ, the Antitype of *Jepthah*; and the more lean Pronunciation of the *Ephraimites* his Enemies, may represent their empty Ears, typifying the Shew of Religion in Hypocrites, without Substance and Fruit. This is agreeable to the Doctrine we are abundantly taught in Scripture, *viz.* That he who is set to judge those who pass through Death, whether they have a Right to enter into the heavenly *Canaan* or no, or whether

* Husbandry spiritualiz'd, Chap. xii.

whether they ſhould not be ſlain, will judge every Man according to his Works.

We ſeem to be taught the ſame Things, by the Rules given for the Prieſts diſcerning the Leproſy. In many Caſes it was impoſſible for the Prieſt to determine whether a Man had the Leproſy, or whether he were clean, by the moſt narrow Inſpection of the Appearances that were upon him, 'till he had waited to ſee what the Appearances would come to, and had ſhut up the Perſon who ſhewed himſelf to him, one ſeven Days after another; and when he judged, he was to determine by the Hair, which grew out of the Spot that was ſhewed him, which was as it were the Fruit that it brought forth.

And here, before I finiſh what I have to ſay under this Head, I would ſay ſomething to a ſtrange Notion ſome have of late been led away with, of certainly knowing the good Eſtate that others are in, as though it were immediately revealed to them from Heaven, by their Love flowing out to them in an extraordinary Manner. They argue thus, that their Love being very ſenſible and great, it may be certainly known by them who feel it, to be a true chriſtian Love: And if it be a true chriſtian Love, the Spirit of God muſt be the Author of it: And inaſmuch as the Spirit of God, who knows certainly, whether others are the Children of God or no, and is a Spirit of Truth, is pleaſed, by an uncommon Influence upon them, to cauſe their Love to flow out in an extraordinary Manner, towards ſuch a Perſon, as a Child of God; it muſt needs be, that this infallible Spirit, who deceives none, knows, that that Perſon is a Child of God. But ſuch Perſons might be convinced of the Falſeneſs of their Reaſoning, if they would conſider whether or no it be not their Duty, and what God requires of them, to love thoſe as the Children of God, who they think are the Children of God, and whom they have no Reaſon to think otherwiſe of, from all that they can ſee in them, though God, who

ſearches

searches the Hearts, knows them not to be his Children. If it be their Duty, then it is Good, and the Want of it Sin; and therefore, surely the Spirit of God may be the Author of of it: The Spirit of God, without being a Spirit of Falshood, may in such a Case assist a Person to do his Duty, and keep him from Sin. But then they argue from the uncommon Degree and special Manner, in which their Love flows out to the Person; which they think the Spirit of God never would cause, if he did not know the Object to be a Child of God. But then I would ask them, whether or no it is not their Duty to love all such as they are bound to think are the Children of God, from all that they can see in them, to a very great Degree, though God, from other Things which he sees, that are out of Sight to them, knows them not to be so. 'Tis Men's Duty to love all whom they are bound in Charity to look upon as the Children of God, with a vastly dearer Affection than they commonly do. As we ought to love Christ to the utmost Capacity of our Nature, so 'tis our Duty to love those who we think are so near and dear to him as his Members, with an exceeding dear Affection, as Christ has loved us; and therefore it is Sin in us not to love them so. We ought to pray to God that he would, by his Spirit keep us from Sin, and enable us to do our Duty: And may not his Spirit answer our Prayers, and enable us to do our Duty, in a particular Instance, without lying? If he can't, then the Spirit of God is bound not to help his People to do their Duty in some Instances, because he can't do without being a Spirit of Falshood. But surely God is so sovereign as that comes to, that he may enable us to do our Duty when he pleases, and on what Occasion he pleases. When Persons think others are his Children, God may have other Ends in causing their exceedingly endeared Love to flow out to them, besides revealing to them, whether their Opinion of them be right or no: He may have that merciful End in it, to enable them to do their Duty, and to keep them from

that dreadful infinite Evil, Sin. And will they ſay God ſhall not ſhew them that Mercy in ſuch a Caſe? If I am at a Diſtance from Home, and hear, that in my Abſence, my Houſe is burnt, but my Family have, in ſome extraordinary Manner, all eſcaped the Flames; and every Thing in the Circumſtances of the Story, as I hear it, makes it appear very credible: It would be a Sin in me, in ſuch a Caſe, not to feel a very great Degree of Gratitude to God, though the Story indeed be not true. And is not God ſo ſovereign, that he may if he pleaſes, ſhew me that Mercy on that Occaſion, and enable me to do my Duty in a much further Degree than I uſed to do it, and yet not incur the Charge of Deceitfulneſs, in confirming a Falſhood?

'Tis exceeding manifeſt, that Error or Miſtake may be the Occaſion of a gracious Exerciſe, and conſequently a gracious Influence of the Spirit of God, by Rom. xiv. 6. *He that eateth to the Lord, he eateth, and giveth God Thanks; and he that eateth not to the Lord, he eateth not, and giveth God Thanks.* The Apoſtle is ſpeaking of thoſe, who through erroneous and needleſs Scruples, avoided eating legally unclean Meats.—By this it is very evident, that there may be true Exerciſes of Grace, a true Reſpect *to the Lord*, and particularly, a true Thankfulneſs, which may be occaſioned, both by an erroneous Judgment and Practice. And conſequently, an Error may be the Occaſion of thoſe truly holy Exerciſes that are from the infallible Spirit of God. And if ſo, 'tis certainly too much for us to determine, to how great a Degree the Spirit of God may give this holy Exerciſe, on ſuch an Occaſion.

This Notion, of certainly diſcerning another's State, by Love flowing out, is not only not founded on Reaſon or Scripture, but it is anti-ſcriptural; 'tis againſt the Rules of Scripture; which ſay not a Word of any ſuch Way of judging the State of others as this, but direct us to judge chiefly by the Fruits that are ſeen in them. And it is againſt the Doctrines of Scripture, which do plainly

plainly teach us that the State of other Souls towards God, cannot be known by us, as in Rev. ii. 17. *To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the* hidden Manna; *and I will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which* no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. And Rom. ii. 29. *He is a* Jew, *which is one inwardly; and Circumcision is that of the Heart; in the Spirit, and not in the Letter; whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.* That by this last Expression, *whose Praise is not of Men, but of God*, the Apostle has Respect to the Insufficiency of Men to judge concerning him, whether he be inwardly a *Jew* or no (as they could easily see by outward Marks, whether Men were outwardly *Jews)* and would signify, that it belongs to God alone to give a determining Voice in this Matter, is confirmed by the same Apostle's Use of the Phrase, in 1 Cor. iv. 5. *Therefore judge nothing before the Time, until the Lord come; who both will bring to Light the hidden Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the Counsels of the Hearts;* and then shall every Man have Praise of God. The Apostle, in the two foregoing Verses, says, *But with me, it is a very small Thing, that I should be judged of you, or of Man's Judgment: Yea, I judge not mine own self, for I know nothing by myself, yet I am not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord.* And again, it is further confirmed, because the Apostle in this second Chapter to the *Romans*, directs his Speech especially to those who had a high Conceit of their own Holiness, made their Boast of God, and were confident of their own Discerning, and that they knew God's Will, and approved the Things which were excellent, or tried the Things that differ (as it is in the Margin.) V. 18. *And were confident that they were Guides of the Blind, and a Light to them which are in Darkness, Instructors of the Foolish, Teachers of Babes*; and so took upon them to judge others, see V. 1. and 17, 18, 19, 20.

And how arrogant must the Notion be, that they have, who imagine they can certainly know others Godliness,

when that great Apoſtle *Peter* pretends not to ſay any more concerning *Silvanus*, than that he was *a faithful Brother, as he ſuppoſed*; 1 Pet. v. 12. Though this *Sylvanus* appears to have been a very eminent Miniſter of Chriſt, and an Evangeliſt, and a famous Light in God's Church at that Day, and an intimate Companion of the Apoſtles. See 2 Cor. i. 19. 1 Theſ. i. 1. and 2 Theſ. i. 1.

PART

PART III.

Shewing what are diſtinguiſhing Signs of truly gracious and holy Affections.

COME now to the Second Thing appertaining to the *Trial* of religious Affections, which was propoſed, *viz.* To take Notice of ſome Things, wherein thoſe Affections that are ſpiritual and gracious, do differ from thoſe that are not ſo.

But before I proceed directly to the diſtinguiſhing Characters, I would previouſly mention ſome Things, which I deſire may be obſerved, concerning the Marks I ſhall lay down.

1. That I am far from undertaking to give ſuch Signs of gracious Affections, as ſhall be ſufficient to enable any certainly to diſtinguiſh true Affection from falſe in others; or to determine poſitively which of their Neighbours are true Profeſſors, and which are Hypocrites. In ſo doing, I ſhould be guilty of that Arrogance which I have been condemning. Though it be plain that Chriſt has given Rules to all Chriſtians, to enable them to judge of Profeſſors of Religion, whom they are concerned

concerned with, ſo far as is neceſſary for their own Safety, and to prevent their being led into a Snare by falſe Teachers, and falſe Pretenders to Religion; and though it be alſo beyond Doubt, that the Scriptures do abound with Rules, which may be very ſerviceable to Miniſters, in counſelling and conducting Souls committed to their Care, in Things appertaining to their ſpiritual and eternal State; yet, 'tis alſo evident, that it was never God's Deſign, to give us any Rules, by which we may certainly know, who of our Fellow Profeſſors are his, and to make a full and clear Separation between Sheep and Goats: But that on the Contrary, it was God's Deſign to reſerve this to himſelf, as his Prerogative. And therefore no ſuch diſtinguiſhing Signs as ſhall enable Chriſtians or Miniſters to do this, are ever to be expected to the World's End: For no more is ever to be expected from any Signs, that are to be found in the Word of God, or gathered from it, than Chriſt deſigned them for.

2. No ſuch Signs are to be expected, that ſhall be ſufficient to enable thoſe Saints certainly to diſcern their own good Eſtate, who are very low in Grace, or are ſuch as have much departed from God, and are fallen into a dead, carnal and unchriſtian Frame. It is not agreeable to God's Deſign (as has been already obſerved) that ſuch ſhould know their good Eſtate: Nor is it deſirable that they ſhould; but on the contrary, every Way beſt that they ſhould not; and we have Reaſon to bleſs God, that he has made no Proviſion that ſuch ſhould certainly know the State that they are in, any other Way than by firſt coming out of the ill Frame and Way they are in.

Indeed it is not properly through the Defect of the Signs given in the Word of God, that every Saint living, whether ſtrong or weak, and thoſe who are in a bad Frame, as well as others, can't certainly know their good Eſtate by them. For the Rules in themſelves are certain and infallible, and every Saint has, or has had

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thoſe Things in himſelf, which are ſure Evidences of Grace; for *every*, even the *leaſt* Act of Grace is ſo. But it is through his Defect to whom the Signs are given. There is a two-fold Defect in that Saint who is very low in Grace, or in an ill Frame, which makes it impoſſible for him to know certainly that he has true Grace, by the beſt Signs and Rules which can be given him. *Firſt*, A Defect in the *Object*, or the Qualification to be view'd and examin'd. I don't mean an eſſential Defect; becauſe I ſuppoſe the Perſon to be a real Saint; but a Defect in Degree: Grace being very ſmall, cannot be clearly and certainly diſcern'd and diſtinguiſhed. Things that are very ſmall, we can't clearly diſcern their Form, or diſtinguiſh them one from another; though, as they are in themſelves, their Form may be very different. There is doubtleſs a great Difference between the Body of Man, and the Bodies of other Animals, in the firſt Conception in the Womb: But yet if we ſhould view the different *Embyros*, it might not be poſſible for us to diſcern the Difference, by reaſon of the imperfect State of the Object; but as it comes to greater Perfection, the Difference becomes very plain. The Difference between Creatures of very contrary Qualities, is not ſo plainly to be ſeen while they are very young, even after they are actually bro't forth, as in their more perfect State. The Difference between Doves and Ravens, or Doves and Vultures, when they firſt come out of the Egg, is not ſo evident; but as they grow to their Perfection, 'tis exceeding great and manifeſt. Another Defect attending the Grace of thoſe I am ſpeaking, is its being mingled with ſo much Corruption, which clouds and hides it, and makes it impoſſible for it certainly to be known. Tho' different Things that are before us, may have in themſelves many Marks thoroughly diſtinguiſhing them one from another; yet if we ſee them only in a thick Smoke, it may nevertheleſs be impoſſible to diſtinguiſh them. A fix'd Star is eaſily diſtinguiſhable from a Comet, in a clear Sky; but if we view them through a Cloud, it may

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be impoſſible to ſee the Difference. When true Chriſtians are in an ill Frame, Guilt lies on the Conſciences: which will bring Fear, and ſo prevent the Peace and Joy of an aſſured Hope.

Secondly, There is in ſuch a Caſe a Defect in the *Eye*. As the Feebleneſs of Grace and Prevalence of Corruption, obſcures the Object; ſo it enfeebles the Sight; it darkens the Sight as to all ſpiritual Objects, of which Grace is one. Sin is like ſome Diſtempers of the Eyes, that make Things to appear of different Colours from thoſe which properly belong to them, and like many other Diſtempers that put the Mouth out of Taſte, ſo as to diſenable from diſtinguiſhing good and wholeſome Food from bad, but every Thing taſtes bitter. Men in a corrupt and carnal Frame, have their ſpiritual Senſes in but poor Plight for judging and diſtinguiſhing ſpiritual Things.

For theſe Reaſons, no Signs that can be given, will actually ſatisfy Perſons in ſuch a Caſe: Let the Signs that are given, be never ſo good and infallible, and clearly laid down, they will not ſerve them. It is like giving a Man Rules, how to diſtinguiſh viſible Objects in the Dark: The Things themſelves may be very different, and their Difference may be very well and diſtinctly deſcribed to him; yet all is inſufficient to enable him to diſtinguiſh them, becauſe he is in the Dark. And therefore many perſons in ſuch a Caſe ſpend Time in a fruitleſs Labour, in poring on paſt Experiences, and examining themſelves by Signs they hear laid down from the Pulpit, or that they read in Books; when there is other Work for them to do, that is much more expected of them; which, while they neglect, all their Self-Examinations are like to be in vain, if they ſhould ſpend never ſo much Time in them. The accurſed Thing is to be deſtroyed from their Camp, and *Achan* to be ſlain; and till this be done, they will be in Trouble. 'Tis not God's Deſign that Men ſhould obtain Aſſurance in any other Way, than by mortifying Corruption

tion, and encreasing in Grace, and obtaining the lively Exercises of it. And although Self-Examination be a Duty of great Use and Importance, and by no Means to be neglected; yet it is not the principal Means, by which the Saints do get Satisfaction of their good Estate. Assurance is not to be obtain'd so much by *Self-Examination*, as by *Action*. The Apostle *Paul* sought Assurance chiefly this Way, even by *forgetting the Things that were behind, and reaching forth unto those Things that were before, pressing towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus; if by any Means he might attain unto the Resurrection of the Dead.* And it was by this Means chiefly that he obtain'd Assurance, 1 Cor. ix. 26. *I therefore so run, as not uncertainly.* He obtain'd Assurance of winning the Prize, more by *running*, than by *considering*. The *Swiftness of his Pace*, did more towards his Assurance of a Conquest, than the *Strictness of his Examination*. Giving all Diligence to grow in Grace, by adding to Faith, Vertue, *&c.* is the Direction that the Apostle *Peter* gives us, for *making our Calling and Election sure*, and having *an Entrance ministred to us abundantly, into Christ's everlasting Kingdom*; signifying to us, that without this, our Eyes will be dim, and we shall be as Men in the Dark, that cannot plainly see Things past or to come, either the Forgiveness of our Sins past, or our heavenly Inheritance that is future, and *far off*, 2 Pet. i. 5,—11*

Therefore, tho' good Rules to distinguish true Grace from counterfeit, may tend to convince Hypocrites, and be of great Use to the Saints, in many Respects; and

* "The Way to know your Godliness, is to renew the visible "Exercises of Grace."——The more the visible Exercises of Grace "are renewed, the more certain you will be. The more frequently "these Actings are renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your "Assurance will be."—"The more Men's Grace is multiplied, the "more their Peace is multiplied; 2 Pet. i. 2. *Grace and Peace be mul-* "*tiplied unto you, through the Knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our* "*Lord.*" *Stoddard*'s Way to know Sincerity and Hypocrisy, p. 139, and 142.

and among other Benefits, may be very uſeful to them to remove many needleſs Scruples, and eſtabliſh their Hope; yet I am far from pretending to lay down any ſuch Rules, as ſhall be ſufficient of themſelves, without other Means, to enable all true Saints to ſee their good Eſtate, or as ſuppoſing they ſhould be the principal Means of their Satisfaction.

3. Nor is there much Encouragement, in the Experience of preſent or paſt Times, to lay down Rules or Marks to diſtinguiſh between true and falſe Affections, in Hopes of convincing any conſiderable Number of that Sort of Hypocrites, who have been deceived with great falſe Diſcoveries and Affections, and are once ſettled in a falſe Confidence, and high Conceit of their own ſuppoſed great Experiences and Privileges. Such Hypocrites are ſo conceited of their own Wiſdom, and ſo blinded and harden'd with a very great Self-Righteouſneſs, (but very ſubtil and ſecret, under the Diſguiſe of great Humility) and ſo invincible a Fondneſs of their pleaſing Conceit, of their great Exaltation, that it uſually ſignifies nothing at all, to lay before them the moſt convincing Evidences of their Hypocriſy. Their State is indeed deplorable, and next to thoſe that have committed the unpardonable Sin; ſome of this Sort of Perſons ſeem to be moſt out of the Reach of Means of Conviction and Repentance. But yet the laying down good Rules may be a Means of preventing ſuch Hypocrites, and of convincing many of other Kinds of Hypocrites: And God is able to convince even this Kind, and his Grace is not to be limited, nor Means to be neglected. And beſides, ſuch Rules may be of Uſe to the true Saints, to detect falſe Affections, which they may have mingled with true. And be a Means of their Religion's becoming more pure, and like Gold tried in the Fire.

Having premiſed theſe Things, I now proceed directly to take Notice of thoſe Things in which true religious Affections are diſtinguiſhed from falſe. I.

I. Affections that are truly ſpiritual and gracious, do ariſe from thoſe Influences and Operations on the Heart, which are *ſpiritual*, *ſupernatural* and *divine*.

I will explain what I mean by theſe Terms, whence will appear their Uſe to diſtinguiſh between thoſe Affections which are ſpiritual, and thoſe which are not ſo.

We find that true Saints, or thoſe Perſons who are ſanctified by the Spirit of God, are in the New Teſtament called *ſpiritual* Perſons. And their being *ſpiritual* is ſpoken of as their peculiar Character, and that wherein they are diſtinguiſhed from thoſe who are not ſanctified. This is evident, becauſe thoſe who are ſpiritual are ſet in Oppoſition to natural Men, and carnal Men. Thus the ſpiritual Man, and the natural Man, are ſet in Oppoſition one to another; 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. *The* natural Man *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them; becaaſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. But he that is* ſpiritual *judgeth all Things.* The Scripture explains itſelf to mean an ungodly Man, or one that has no Grace, by a natural Man: Thus the Apoſtle *Jude*, ſpeaking of certain *ungodly Men*, that had crept in unawares among the Saints, Verſe 4, of his Epiſtle, ſays, Verſe 19. *Theſe are* ſenſual, *having not the Spirit.* This the Apoſtle gives as a Reaſon why they behaved themſelves in ſuch a wicked Manner as he had deſcribed. Here the Word tranſlated *ſenſual*, in the Original is *Pſuxikoi*; which is the very ſame, which in thoſe Verſes in 1 *Cor.* Chap. 2. is tranſlated *natural.* In the like Manner, in the Continuation of the ſame Diſcourſe, in the next Verſe but one, *ſpiritual Men* are oppoſed to *carnal Men*; which the Connection plainly ſhews mean the ſame, as *ſpiritual Men* and *natural Men*, in the foregoing Verſes; *And I, Brethren, could not ſpeak unto you, as unto* ſpiritual, *but as unto* carnal; *i. e.* as in a great Meaſure unſanctified. That by carnal the Apoſtle means corrupt and unſanctified, is abundantly evident, by *Rom.* vii. 25. and viii. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13. *Gal.* v. 16, to the End.

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Col. ii. 18. Now therefore, if by natural and carnal, in these Texts, he intended *unsanctified*; then doubtless by spiritual, which is opposed thereto, is meant *sanctified* and gracious.

And as the Saints are called spiritual in Scripture, so we also find, that there are certain Properties, Qualities and Principles, that have the same Epithet given them. So we read of a *spiritual Mind*, Rom. viii. 6, 7, and of *spiritual Wisdom*, Col. i. 9. and of *spiritual Blessings*, Eph. i. 3.

Now it may be observed, that the Epithet *spiritual*, in these and other parallel Texts of the New Testament, is not used to signify any Relation of Persons or Things to the Spirit or Soul of Man, as the spiritual Part of Man, in Opposition to the Body, which is the material Part: Qualities are not said to be spiritual, because they have their Seat in the Soul, and not in the Body: For there are some Properties that the Scripture calls *carnal* or *fleshly*, which have their Seat as much in the Soul, as those Properties that are called *spiritual*. Thus it is with Pride and Self-Righteousness, and a Man's trusting to his own Wisdom, which the Apostle calls *fleshly*; Col. ii. 18. Nor are Things called spiritual, because they are conversant about those Things that are immaterial, and not corporeal. For so was the Wisdom of the wise Men, and Princes of this World, conversant about Spirits, and immaterial Beings; which yet the Apostle speaks of as *natural Men*, totally ignorant of those Things that are *spiritual*, 1 Cor. Chap. ii. But it is with Relation to the *Holy Ghost*, or *Spirit of God*, that Persons or Things are termed spiritual, in the New-Testament. *Spirit*, as the Word is used to signify the third Person in the Trinity, is the Substantive, of which is formed the Adjective *spiritual*, in the holy Scriptures. Thus Christians are called spiritual Persons, because they are born of the Spirit, and because of the Indwelling and holy Influences of the Spirit of God in them. And Things are called spiritual as related to the Spirit of God;

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1 Cor. ii. 13, 14. *Which Things alſo we ſpeak, not in the Words which Man's Wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, comparing ſpiritual Things with ſpiritual. But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God.* Here the Apoſtle himſelf expreſly ſignifies, that by *ſpiritual Things*, he means *the Things of the Spirit of God*, and *Things which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth.* The ſame is yet more abundantly apparent by viewing the whole Context. Again, Rom. viii. 6. *To be* carnally minded *is Death: But to be* ſpiritually minded *is Life and Peace.* The Apoſtle explains what he means by being carnally and ſpiritually minded, in what follows in the 9th Verſe, and ſhews that by being ſpiritually minded, he means a having the Indwelling and holy Influences of the Spirits of God in the Heart. *But ye are not* in the Fleſh, *but* in the Spirit, *if ſo be* the Spirit of God dwell in you. *Now if any Man* have not the Spirit of Chriſt, *he is none of his.* The ſame is evident by all the Context. But Time would fail to produce all the Evidence there is of this, in the New-Teſtament.

And it muſt be here obſerved, that although it is with Relation to the Spirit of God and his Influences, that Perſons and Things are called ſpiritual; yet not all thoſe Perſons who are ſubject to any Kind of Influence of the Spirit of God, are ordinarily called ſpiritual in the New-Teſtament. They who have only the common Influences of God's Spirit are not ſo called, in the Places cited above, but only thoſe, who have the ſpecial, gracious, and ſaving Influences of God's Spirit: As is evident, becauſe it has been already proved, that by ſpiritual Men is meant godly Men, in Oppoſition to natural, carnal and unſanctify'd Men. And it is moſt plain, that the Apoſtle by ſpiritually minded, *Rom.* viii. 6. means graciouſly minded. And though the extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit, which natural Men might have, are ſometimes called ſpiritual, becauſe they are from the Spirit; yet natural Men, whatever Gifts of the Spirit they had, were not, in the uſual Language of the New-Teſta-

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ment, called spiritual Persons. For it was not by Men's having the Gifts of the Spirit, but by their having the Vertues of the Spirit, that they were called spiritual; as is apparent, by Gal. vi. 1. *Brethren, if any Man be overtaken in a Fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness.* Meekness is one of those Vertues which the Apostle had just spoken of, in the Verses next preceding, shewing what are the *Fruits of the Spirit.* Those Qualifications are said to be spiritual in the Language of the New-Testament, which are truly gracious and holy, and peculiar to the Saints.

Thus when we read of spiritual Wisdom and Understanding (as in Col. i. 9. *We desire that ye may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will,* in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding.) Hereby is intended that Wisdom which is gracious, and from the sanctifying Influences of the Spirit of God. For doubtless, by *spiritual Wisdom,* is meant that which is opposite to what the Scripture calls *natural Wisdom*; as the *spiritual Man* is opposed to the *natural Man.* And therefore spiritual Wisdom is doubtless the same with that Wisdom which is from above, that the Apostle *James* speaks of, Jam. iii. 17. *The Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, &c.* for this the Apostle opposes to natural Wisdom, Ver. 15. *This Wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual*——the last Word in the Original is the same that is translated *natural,* in 1 Cor. ii. 14.

So that although natural Men may be the Subjects of many Influences of the Spirit of God, as is evident by many Scriptures, as *Numb.* xxiv. 2. 1 *Sam.* x. 10. and xi. 6. and xvi. 14. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 1, 2, 3. *Heb.* vi. 4, 5, 6. and many others; yet they are not in the Sense of the Scripture, spiritual Persons; neither are any of those Effects, common Gifts, Qualities or Affections, that are from the Influence of the Spirit of God upon them, called spiritual Things. The great Difference lies in these two Things.

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1. The Spirit of God is given to the true Saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting Abode; and to influence their Hearts, as a Principle of new Nature, or as a divine supernatural Spring of Life and Action. The Scriptures represent the Holy Spirit, not only as moving, and occasionally influencing the Saints, but as dwelling in them as his Temple, his proper Abode, and everlasting Dwelling-Place; 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. *John* xiv. 16, 17. And he is represented as being there so united to the Faculties of the Soul, that he becomes there a Principle or Spring of new Nature and Life.

So the Saints are said to live by Christ living in them, *Gal.* ii. 2. Christ by his Spirit not only *is* in them, but *lives* in them; and so that they live by his Life; so is his Spirit united to them, as a Principle of Life in them; they don't only drink living Water, but this *living Water becomes a Well* or *Fountain of Water*, in the Soul, *springing up into* spiritual and *everlasting Life*, John iv. 14. and thus becomes a Principle of Life in them; this living Water, this Evangelist himself explains to intend the Spirit of God, *Chap.* vii. 38, 39. The Light of the Sun of Righteousness don't only shine upon them, but is so communicated to them, that they shine also, and become little Images of that Sun which shines upon them; the Sap of the true Vine is not only conveyed into them, as the Sap of a Tree may be conveyed into a Vessel, but is conveyed as Sap is from a Tree into one of it's living Branches, where it becomes a Principle of Life. The Spirit of God being thus communicated and united to the Saints, they are from thence properly denominated from it, and are called *spiritual.*

On the other Hand, though the Spirit of God may many Ways influence natural Men; yet because it is not thus communicated to them, as an indwelling Principle, they don't derive any Denomination or Character from it; for there being no Union, it is not their own. The Light may shine upon a Body that is very dark or black; and though that Body be the Subject of the Light, yet,

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because the Light becomes no Principle of Light in it, so as to cause the Body to shine, hence that Body don't properly receive its Denomination from it, so as to be called a *lightsome Body*. So the Spirit of God acting upon the Soul only, without communicating itself to be an active Principle in it, can't denominate it *spiritual*. A Body that continues black, may be said *not to have Light*, though the Light shines upon it; so natural Men are said *not to have the Spirit*, Jude xix. *sensual*, or *natural* (as the Word is elsewhere rendered) *having not the Spirit*.

2. Another Reason why the Saints and their Vertues are called spiritual, (which is the principal Thing) is that the Spirit of God, dwelling as a vital Principle in their Souls, there produces those Effects wherein he exerts and communicates himself in his own *proper Nature*. Holiness is the Nature of the Spirit of God, therefore he is called in Scripture the *Holy Ghost*. Holiness, which is as it were the Beauty and Sweetness of the Divine Nature, is as much the proper Nature of the Holy Spirit, as Heat is the Nature of Fire, or Sweetness was the Nature of that holy anointing Oil, which was the principal Type of the Holy Ghost, in the *Mosaick* Dispensation; yea, I may rather say that Holiness is as much the proper Nature of the Holy Ghost, as Sweetness was the Nature of the sweet Odour of that Ointment. The Spirit of God so dwells in the Heartsof the Saints, that he there, as a Seed or Spring of Life, exerts and communicates himself, in this his sweet and divine Nature, making the Soul a Partaker of God's Beauty and Christ's Joy, so that the Saint has truly Fellowship *with* the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in thus having the Communion or Participation *of* the Holy Ghost. The Grace which is in the Hearts of the Saints, is of the same Nature with the divine Holiness, as much as 'tis possible for that Holiness to be, which is infinitely less in Degree; as the Brightness that

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is in a Diamond which the Sun ſhines upon, is of the ſame Nature with the Brightneſs of the Sun, but only that it is as nothing to it in Degree. Therefore Chriſt ſays, John iii. 6. *That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit*; *i. e.* the Grace that is begotten in the Hearts of the Saints, is ſomething of the ſame Nature with that Spirit, and ſo is properly called a *ſpiritual Nature*; after the ſame Manner as that which is born of the Fleſh is Fleſh, or that which is born of corrupt Nature is corrupt Nature.

But the Spirit of God never influences the Minds of natural Men after this Manner. Though he may influence them many Ways, yet he never, in any of his Influences, communicates himſelf to them in his own proper Nature. Indeed he never acts diſagreeably to his Nature, either on the Minds of Saints or Sinners: But the Spirit of God may act upon Men agreeably to his own Nature, and not exert his proper Nature in the Acts and Exerciſes of their Minds: The Spirit of God may act ſo, that his Actions may be agreeable to his Nature, and yet may not at all communicate himſelf in his proper Nature, in the Effect of that Action. Thus, for Inſtance, the Spirit of God moved upon the Face of the Waters, and there was nothing diſagreeable to his Nature in that Action; but yet he did not at all communicate himſelf in that Action; there was nothing of the proper Nature of the Holy Spirit in that Motion of the Waters. And ſo he may act upon the Minds of Men many Ways, and not communicate himſelf any more than when he acts on inanimate Things.

Thus not only the Manner of the *Relation* of the Spirit, who is the *Operator*, to the Subject of his Operations, is different; as the Spirit operates in the Saints, as dwelling in them, as an abiding Principle of Action, whereas he doth not ſo operate upon Sinners; but the Influence and *Operation itſelf* is different, and the *Effect wrought* exceeding different. So that not only the Perſons are called *ſpiritual*, as having the Spirit of God

dwelling in them; but those Qualifications, Affections and Experiences that are wrought in them by the Spirit, are also *spiritual*, and therein differ vastly in their Nature and Kind from all that a natural Man is or can be the Subject of, while he remains in a natural State; and also from all that Men or Devils can be the Authors of: 'Tis a spiritual Work in this high Sense; and therefore above all other Works is peculiar to the Spirit of God. There is no Work so high and excellent; for there is no Work wherein God does so much communicate himself, and wherein the mere Creature hath, in so high a Sense, a Participation of God; so that it is expressed in Scripture by the Saints *being made Partakers of the divine Nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. and *having God dwelling in them, and they in God*, 1 John iv. 12, 15, 16. and Chap. iii. 21. *and having Christ in them*, John xvii. 21. Rom. viii. 10. *being the Temples of the living God*, 2 Cor. vi. 16. *living by Christ's Life*, Gal. ii. 20. *being made Partakers of God's Holiness*, Heb. xii. 10. *having Christ's Love dwelling in them*, John xvii. 26. *having his Joy fulfilled in them*, John xvii. 13. *seeing Light in God's Light*, and *being made to drink of the River of God's Pleasures*, Psal. xxxvi. 8, 9. *having Fellowship with God*, or *communicating and partaking with him* (as the Word signifies) 1 John i. 3. Not that the Saints are made Partakers of the Essence of God, and so are *Godded* with God, and *Christed* with Christ, according to the abominable and blasphemous Language and Notions of some Hereticks; but, to use the Scripture Phrase, they are made Partakers of God's *Fullness*, *Eph.* iii. 17, 18, 19. *John* i. 16. that is, of God's spiritual Beauty and Happiness, according to the Measure and Capacity of a Creature; for so it is evident the Word *Fullness* signifies in Scripture Language. Grace in the Hearts of the Saints, being therefore the most glorious Work of God, wherein he communicates of the Goodness of his Nature, it is doubtless his peculiar Work, and in an eminent Manner, above the Power of all Creatures. And the

Influences

Influences of the Spirit of God in this, being thus peculiar to God, and being thoſe wherein God does, in ſo high a Manner, communicate himſelf, and make the Creature Partaker of the divine Nature, (the Spirit of God communicating itſelf in its own proper Nature.) This is what I mean by thoſe Influences that are *divine*, when I ſay that *truly gracious Affections do ariſe from thoſe Influences that are ſpiritual and divine.*

The true Saints only have that which is ſpiritual; others have nothing which is divine, in the Senſe that has been ſpoken of. They not only have not theſe Communications of the Spirit of God in ſo high a *Degree* as the Saints, but have nothing of that *Nature* or *Kind.* For the Apoſtle *James* tells us, that *natural* Men *have not the Spirit*; and Chriſt teaches the Neceſſity of a New Birth, or a being born of the Spirit, from this, that *He that is born of the Fleſh, has* only *Fleſh*, and no *Spirit*, *John* iii. 6. They have not the Spirit of God dwelling in them in any Degree; for the Apoſtle teaches, that all who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them are ſome of his, *Rom.* viii. 9, 10, 11. And an having the Spirit of God is ſpoken of as a certain Sign that Perſons ſhall have the eternal Inheritance; for 'tis ſpoken of as the Earneſt of it, 2 *Cor.* i. 22. and v. 5. *Eph*, i. 14. and an having any Thing *of the Spirit* is mentioned as a ſure Sign of being in Chriſt, 1 John iv. 13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, becauſe he hath given us* of *his Spirit.* Ungodly Men, not only have not ſo much of the divine Nature as the Saints, but they are not *Partakers of it*; which implies, that they have nothing of it; for a being *Partaker* of the divine Nature is ſpoken of as the peculiar Privilege of the true Saints, 2 *Pet.* i. 4. Ungodly Men are not *Partakers of God's Holineſs*, Heb. xii. 10. A natural Man has no Experience of any of thoſe Things that are ſpiritual: The Apoſtle teaches us, that he is ſo far from it, that he knows nothing about them, he is a perfect Stranger to them, the Talk about ſuch Things

is all Fooliſhneſs and Nonſenſe to him, he knows not what it means, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Fooliſhneſs to him; neither can he know them; becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* And to the like Purpoſe Chriſt teaches us that the World is wholly unacquainted with the Spirit of God. John xiv. 17. *Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive; becauſe it ſeeth him not, neither knoweth him.* And 'tis further evident, that natural Men have nothing in them of the ſame Nature with the true Grace of the Saints, becauſe the Apoſtle teaches us that thoſe of them who go furtheſt in Religion, have *no Charity*, or true chriſtian Love, 1 *Cor.* Chap. xiii. So Chriſt elſewhere reproves the Phariſees, thoſe high Pretenders to Religion, that they *had not the Love of God in them.* John v. 42. Hence natural Men have no Communion or Fellowſhip with Chriſt, or Participation with him, (as theſe Words ſignify) for this is ſpoken of as the peculiar Privilege of the Saints, 1 *John* i. 3. together with Verſe 6, 7. and 1 *Cor.* i. 8, 9. And the Scripture ſpeaks of the actual Being of a gracious Principle in the Soul, though in its firſt beginning, as a Seed there planted, as inconſiſtent with a Man's being a Sinner, 1 *John* iii. 9. And natural Men are repreſented in Scripture as having no ſpiritual Light, no ſpiritual Life, and no ſpiritual Being; and therefore Converſion is often compared to opening the Eyes of the Blind, raiſing the Dead, and a Work of Creation, (wherein Creatures are made entirely new) and becoming new born Children.

From theſe Things it is evident, that thoſe gracious Influences which the Saints are the Subjects of, and the Effects of God's Spirit which they experience, are entirely above Nature, altogether of a different Kind from any Thing that Men find within themſelves by Nature, or only in the Exerciſe of natural Principles; and are Things which no Improvement of thoſe Qualifications, or Principles that are natural, no advancing or exalting them

them to higher Degrees, and no Kind of Compoſition of them, will ever bring Men to; becauſe they not only differ from what is natural, and from every Thing that natural Men experience, in Degree and Circumſtances; but alſo in Kind; and are of a Nature vaſtly more excellent. And this is what I mean by *ſupernatural*, when I ſay, that *gracious Affections are from thoſe Influences that are ſupernatural.*

From hence it follows, that in thoſe gracious Exerciſes and Affections which are wrought in the Minds of the Saints, through the ſaving Influences of the Spirit of God, there is a new inward *Perception* or *Senſation* of their Minds, entirely different in its Nature and Kind, from any Thing that ever their Minds were the Subjects of before they were ſanctified. For doubtleſs if God by his mighty Power produces ſomething that is new, not only in Degree and Circumſtances, but in its whole Nature, and that which could be produced by no exalting, varying or compounding of what was there before, or by adding any Thing of the like Kind: I ſay, if God produces ſomething thus new in a Mind, that is a perceiving, thinking, conſcious Thing; then doubtleſs ſomething entirely new is felt, or perceived, or thought; or, which is the ſame Thing, there is ſome new Senſation or Perception of the Mind, which is entirely of a new Sort, and which could be produced by no exalting, varying or compounding of that Kind of Perceptions or Senſations which the Mind had before; or there is what ſome Metaphyſicians call a new *ſimple Idea.* If Grace be, in the Senſe above deſcribed, an entirely new Kind of Principle; then the Exerciſes of it are alſo entirely a new Kind of Exerciſes. And if there be in the Soul a new Sort of Exerciſes which it is conſcious of, which the Soul knew nothing of before, and which no Improvement, Compoſition or Management of what it was before conſcious or ſenſible of, could produce, or any Thing like it; then it follows that the Mind has an entirely new Kind of Perception or Senſation;

Senſation; and here is, as it were, a new *ſpiritual Senſe* that the Mind has, or a Principle of new Kind of Perception or ſpiritual Senſation, which is in its whole Nature different from any former Kinds of Senſation of the Mind, as Taſting is diverſe from any of the other Senſes; and ſomething is perceived by a true Saint, in the Exerciſe of this new Senſe of Mind, in ſpiritual and divine Things, as entirely diverſe from any Thing that is perceived in them, by natural Men, as the ſweet Taſte of Honey is diverſe from the Ideas Men get of Honey by only looking on it, and feeling of it. So that the ſpiritual Perceptions which a ſanctified and ſpiritual Perſon has, are not only diverſe from all that natural Men have, after the Manner that the Ideas or Perceptions of the ſame Senſe may differ one from another, but rather as the Ideas and Senſations of different Senſes do differ. Hence the Work of the Spirit of God in Regeneration is often in Scripture compared to the giving a new Senſe, giving Eyes to ſee, and Ears to hear, unſtopping the Ears of the Deaf, and opening the Eyes of them that were born Blind, and turning from Darkneſs unto Light. And becauſe this ſpiritual Senſe is immenſely the moſt noble and excellent, and that without which all other Principles of Perception, and all our Faculties are uſeleſs and vain; therefore the giving this new Senſe, with the bleſſed Fruits and Effects of it in the Soul, is compared to a raiſing the Dead, and to a new Creation.

This new ſpiritual Senſe, and the new Diſpoſitions that attend it, are no new *Faculties*, but are new *Principles* of Nature, I uſe the Word *Principles*, for want of a Word of a more determinate Signification. By a *Principle of Nature* in this Place, I mean that Foundation which is laid in Nature, either old or new, for any particular Manner or Kind of Exerciſe of the Faculties of the Soul; or a natural Habit or Foundation for Action, giving a Perſon Ability and Diſpoſition to exert the Faculties in Exerciſes of ſuch a certain Kind; ſo

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that to exert the Faculties in that Kind of Exercises, may be said to be his Nature. So this new spiritual Sense is not a new Faculty of Understanding, but it is a new Foundation laid in the Nature of the Soul, for a new Kind of Exercises of the same Faculty of Understanding. So that new holy Disposition of Heart that attends this new Sense, is not a new Faculty of Will, but a Foundation laid in the Nature of the Soul for a new Kind of Exercises of the same Faculty of Will.

The Spirit of God, in all his Operations upon the Minds of natural Men, only moves, impresses, assists, improves, or some other Way acts upon *natural Principles*; but gives no new *spiritual Principle*. Thus when the Spirit of God gives a natural Man Visions, as he did *Balaam*, he only impresses a natural Principle, *viz.* the Sense of seeing, immediately exciting Ideas of that Sense; but he gives no new Sense; neither is there any Thing supernatural, spiritual or divine in it. So if the Spirit of God impresses on a Man's Imagination, either in a Dream, or when he is awake, any outward Ideas of any of the Senses, either Voices, or Shapes and Colours, 'tis only exciting Ideas of the same Kind that he has by natural Principles and Senses. So if God reveals to any natural Man, any secret Fact; as for Instance, something that he shall hereafter see or hear; this is not infusing or exercising any new spiritual Principle, or giving the Ideas of any new spiritual Sense; 'tis only impressing, in an extraordinary Manner, the Ideas that will hereafter be received by Sight and Hearing. So in the more ordinary Influences of the Spirit of God on the Hearts of Sinners, he only assists natural Principles to do the same Work to a greater Degree, which they do of themselves by Nature. Thus the Spirit of God, by his common Influences may assist Men's natural Ingeniosity, as he assisted *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* in the curious Works of the Tabernacle: so he may assist Men's natural Abilities in political Affairs, and improve their Courage, and other natural Qualifications;

as

as he is said to have put his Spirit on the seventy Elders, and on *Saul*, so as to *give him another Heart:* so God may greatly assist natural Men's Reason, in their Reasoning about secular Things, or about the Doctrines of Religion, and may greatly advance the Clearness of their Apprehensions and Notions of Things of Religion in many Respects, without giving any spiritual Sense. So in those Awakenings and Convictions that natural Men may have, God only assists Conscience, which is a natural Principle, to do that Work in a further Degree, which it naturally does. Conscience naturally gives Men an Apprehension of Right and Wrong, and suggests the Relation there is between Right and Wrong, and a Retribution: The Spirit of God assists Men's Consciences to do this in a greater Degree, helps Conscience against stupifying Influence of worldly Objects and their Lusts. And so there are many other Ways might be mention'd wherein the Spirit acts upon, assists and moves natural Principles; but after all, 'tis no more than Nature moved, acted and improved; here is nothing supernatural and divine. But the Spirit of God in his spiritual Influences on the Hearts of his Saints, operates by infusing or exercising new, divine and supernatural Principles; Principles which are indeed a new and spiritual Nature, and Principles vastly more noble and excellent than all that is in natural Men.

From what has been said it follows, that all spiritual and gracious Affections are attended with, and do arise from some Apprehension, Idea or Sensation of Mind, which is in its whole Nature different, yea exceeding different from all that is or can be in the Mind of a natural Man; and which the natural Man discerns nothing of, and has no Manner of Idea of, (agreeable to 1 *Cor.* ii. 14.) and conceives of no more than a Man without the Sense of Tasting can conceive of the sweet Taste of Honey, or a Man without the Sense of Hearing can conceive of the Melody of a Tune, or a Man born Blind can have a Notion of the Beauty of the Rainbow.

But

But here two Things must be observed in order to the right Understanding of this.

1. On the one Hand it must be observed, that not every Thing which in any Respect appertains to spiritual Affections, is new and entirely different from what natural Men can conceive of, and do experience; some Things are common to gracious Affections with other Affections; many Circumstances, Appendages and Effects are common. Thus a Saint's Love to God has a great many Things appertaining to it, which are common with a Man's natural Love to a near Relation: Love to God makes a Man have Desires of the Honour of God, and a Desire to please him; so does a natural Man's Love to his Friend make him desire his Honour, and desire to please him: Love to God causes a Man to delight in the Thoughts of God, and to delight in the Presence of God, and to desire Conformity to God, and the Enjoyment of God; and so it is with a Man's Love to his Friend; and many other Things might be mentioned which are common to both. But yet that Idea which the Saint has of the Loveliness of God, and that Sensation, and that Kind of Delight he has in that View, which is as it were the Marrow and Quintessence of his Love, is peculiar, and entirely diverse from any Thing that a natural Man has, or can have any Notion of. And even in those Things that seem to be common, there is something peculiar: Both spiritual Love and Natural, cause Desires after the Object beloved; but they be not the same Sort of Desires; there is a Sensation of Soul in the spiritual Desires of one that loves God, which is entirely different from all natural Desires. Both spiritual Love and natural Love are attended with Delight in the Object beloved; but the Sensations of Delight are not the same, but entirely and exceedingly diverse. Natural Men may have Conceptions of many Things *about* spiritual Affections; but there is something in them which is as it were the *Nucleus*, or Kernel of them, that they have no more Conceptions of, than one born blind has of Colours.

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It may be clearly illustrated by this: We will suppose two Men; one is born without the Sense of Tasting, the other has it; the latter loves Honey, and is greatly delighted in it because he knows the sweet Taste of it; the other loves certain Sounds and Colours: The Love of each has many Things that appertain to it, which is common; it causes both to desire and delight in the Object beloved, and causes Grief when it is absent, *&c.* But yet, that Idea or Sensation which he who knows the Taste of Honey, has of its Excellency and Sweetness, that is the Foundation of his Love, is entirely different from any Thing the other has or can have; and that Delight which he has in Honey, is wholly diverse from any Thing that the other can conceive of; though they both delight in their beloved Objects. So both these Persons may in some Respects love the same Object: The one may love a delicious Kind of Fruit, which is beautiful to the Eye, and of a delicious Taste; not only because he has seen its pleasant Colours, but knows its sweet Taste; the other, perfectly ignorant of this, loves it only for its beautiful Colours: There are many Things seem, in some Respect, to be common to both; both love, both desire, and both delight; but the Love, and Desire, and Delight of the one, is altogether diverse from that of the other. The Difference between the Love of a natural Man and spiritual Man is like to this; but only it must be observed, that in one Respect it is vastly greater, *viz.* that the Kinds of Excellency which are perceived in spiritual Objects, by these different Kinds of Persons, are in themselves vastly more diverse, than the different Kinds of Excellency perceived in delicious Fruit, by a *tasting* and a *tasteless* Man; and in another Respect it may not be so great, *viz.* as the spiritual Man may have a spiritual Sense or Taste, to perceive that divine and most peculiar Excellency, but in small Beginnings, and in a very imperfect Degree.

2. On the other Hand, it must be observed, that a natural Man may have those religious Apprehensions and

and Affections, which may be in many Reſpects very new and ſurpriſing to him, and what before he did not conceive of; and yet what he experiences be nothing like the Exerciſes of a Principle of new Nature, or the Senſations of a new ſpiritual Senſe: His Affections may be very new, by extraordinarily moving natural Principles, in a very new Degree, and with a great many new Circumſtances, and a new Co-operation of natural Affections, and a new Compoſition of Ideas; this may be from ſome extraordinary powerful Influence of *Satan* and ſome great Deluſion; but there is nothing but Nature extraordinarily acted. As if a poor Man, that had always dwelt in a Cottage, and had never looked beyond the obſcure Village where he was born, ſhould in a Jeſt, be taken to a magnificent City and Prince's Court, and there arrayed in princely Robes, and ſet in the Throne, with the Crown Royal on his Head, Peers and Nobles bowing before him, and ſhould be made to believe that he was now a glorious Monarch; the Ideas he would have, and the Affections he would experience, would in many Reſpects be very new, and ſuch as he had no Imagination of before; but all is no more, than only extraordinarily raiſing and exciting natural Principles, and newly exalting, varying and compounding ſuch Sort of Ideas, as he has by Nature; there is nothing like giving him a new Senſe.

Upon the Whole, I think it is clearly manifeſt, that all truly gracious Affections do ariſe from ſpecial and peculiar Influences of the Spirit, working that *ſenſible Effect* or *Senſation* in the Souls of the Saints, which are entirely different from all that it is poſſible a natural Man ſhould experience, not only different in Degree and Circumſtances, but different in its whole Nature: So that a natural Man not only cannot experience that which is individually the ſame, but cannot experience any Thing but what is exceeding diverſe, and immenſely below it, in its Kind; and that which the Power of Men or Devils is not ſufficient to produce the like of, or any Thing of the ſame Nature.

I have insisted largely on this Matter, because it is of great Importance and Use, evidently to discover and demonstrate the Delusions of *Satan*, in many Kinds of false religious Affections, which Multitudes are deluded by, and probably have been in all Ages of the christian Church; and to settle and determine many Articles of Doctrine, concerning the Operations of the Spirit of God, and the Nature of true Grace.

Now therefore, to apply these Things to the Purpose of this Discourse.

From hence it appears that Impressions which some have made on their Imagination, or the imaginary Ideas which they have of God, or Christ, or Heaven, or any Thing appertaining to Religion, have nothing in them that is spiritual, or of the Nature of true Grace. Tho' such Things may attend what is spiritual, and be mixed with it, yet in themselves they have nothing that is spiritual, nor are they any Part of gracious Experience.

Here, for the Sake of the common People, I will explain what is intended by *Impressions on the Imagination*, and *imaginary Ideas*. The Imagination is that Power of the Mind, whereby it can have a Conception, or Idea of Things of an external or outward Nature, (that is of such Sort of Things as are the Objects of the outward Senses) when those Things are not present, and be not peceived by the Senses. It is called Imagination from the Word *Image*; because thereby a Person can have an Image of some external Thing in his Mind, when that Thing is not present in Reality, nor any Thing like it. All such Kind of Things as we perceive by our five external Senses, *Seeing*, *Hearing*, *Smelling*, *Tasting* and *Feeling*, are external Things: And when a Person has an Idea, or Image of any of these Sorts of Things in his Mind, when they are not there, and when he don't really see, hear, smell, taste, nor feel them; that is to have an *Imagination* of them, and these Ideas are *imaginary Ideas:* And when such Kind of Ideas are strongly

ſtrongly impreſs'd upon the Mind, and the Image of them in the Mind is very lively, almoſt as if one ſaw them, or heard them, *&c.* that is called an *Impreſſion on the Imagination.* Thus Colours, and Shapes, and a Form of Countenance, they are outward Things; becauſe they are that Sort of Things which are the Objects of the outward Senſe of Seeing: And therefore when any Perſon has in his Mind a lively Idea of any Shape or Colour, or Form of Countenance; that is to have an Imagination of thoſe Things. So if he has an Idea of ſuch Sort of Light or Darkneſs, as he perceives by the Senſe of Seeing; that is to have an Idea of outward Light, and ſo is an Imagination. So if he has an Idea of any Marks made on Paper, ſuppoſe Letters and Words written in a Book; that is to have an external and imaginary Idea of ſuch Kind of Things as we ſometimes perceive by our bodily Eyes. And when we have the Ideas of that Kind of Things which we perceive by any of the other Senſes, as of any Sounds or Voices, or Words ſpoken; this is only to have Ideas of outward Things, *viz.* of ſuch Kind of Things as are perceived by the external Senſe of Hearing, and ſo that alſo is Imagination: and when theſe Ideas are livelily impreſſed, almoſt as if they were really heard with the Ears, this is to have an Impreſſion on the Imagination. And ſo I might go on, and Inſtance in the Ideas of Things appertaining the other three Senſes of *Smelling*, *Taſting* and *Feeling*.

Many who have had ſuch Things have very ignorantly ſuppoſed them to be of the Nature of ſpiritual Diſcoveries. They have had lively Ideas of ſome external Shape, and beautiful Form of Countenance; and this they call ſpiritually ſeeing Chriſt. Some have had impreſs'd upon them Ideas of a great outward Light; and this they call a ſpiritual Diſcovery of God's or Chriſt's Glory. Some have had Ideas of Chriſt's hanging on the Croſs, and his Blood running from his Wounds; and this they call a ſpiritual Sight of Chriſt crucify'd, and

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the Way of Salvation by his Blood. Some have seen him with his Arms open ready to embrace them; and this they call a Discovery of the Sufficiency of Christ's Grace and Love. Some have had lively Ideas of Heaven, and of Christ on his Throne there, and shining Ranks of Saints and Angels; and this they call seeing Heaven open'd to them. Some from Time to Time have had a lively Idea of a Person of a beautiful Countenance smiling upon them; and this they call a spiritual Discovery of the Love of Christ to their Souls, and tasting the Love of Christ. And they look upon it a sufficient Evidence, that these Things are spiritual Discoveries, and that they see them spiritually, because they say they don't see these Things with their bodily Eyes, but in their Hearts; for they can see them when their Eyes are shut. And in like Manner, the Imaginations of some have been impress'd with Ideas of the Sense of Hearing; they have had Ideas of Words, as if they were spoke to them; sometimes they are the Words of Scripture, and sometimes other Words: They have had Ideas of Christ's speaking comfortable Words to them. These Things they have called having the inward Call of Christ, hearing the Voice of Christ spiritually in their Hearts, having the Witness of the Spirit, and the inward Testimony of the Love of Christ, *&c.*—

The common, and less considerate and understanding Sort of People, are the more easily led into Apprehensions, that these Things are spiritual Things, because spiritual Things being invisible, and not Things that can be pointed forth with the Finger, we are forced to use figurative Expressions in speaking of them, and to borrow Names from external and sensible Objects to signify them by. Thus we call a clear Apprension of Things spiritual by the Name of *Light*; and an having such an Apprehension of such or such Things, by the Name of *seeing* such Things; and the Conviction of the Judgment, and the Perswasion of the Will, by the Word

Word of Chriſt in the Goſpel, we ſignify by *ſpiritually hearing the Call of Chriſt:* And the Scripture itſelf abounds with ſuch like figurative Expreſſions. Perſons hearing theſe often uſed, and having preſs'd upon them the Neceſſity of having their Eyes open'd, and having a Diſcovery of ſpiritual Things; and ſeeing Chriſt in his Glory, and having the inward Call, and the like, they ignorantly look and wait for ſome ſuch external Diſcoveries, and imaginary Views as have been ſpoken of; and when they have them, are confident that now their Eyes are open'd, now Chriſt has diſcover'd himſelf to them, and they are his Children; and hence are exceedingly affected and elevated with their Deliverance and Happineſs, and many Kinds of Affections are at once ſet in a violent Motion in them.

But it is exceeding apparent, that ſuch Ideas have nothing in them which is ſpiritual and divine, in the Senſe wherein it has been demonſtrated that all gracious Experiences are ſpiritual and divine. Theſe external Ideas are in no wiſe of ſuch a Sort, that they are entirely and in their whole Nature diverſe from all that Men have by Nature, perfectly different from, and vaſtly above any Senſation which 'tis poſſible a Man ſhould have by any natural Senſe or Principle; ſo that in order to have them, a Man muſt have a new ſpiritual and divine Senſe given him, in order to have any Senſations of that Sort: So far from this, that they are Ideas of the ſame Sort which we have by the external Senſes, that are ſome of the inferior Powers of the human Nature; they are merely Ideas of external Objects, or Ideas of that Nature, of the ſame outward ſenſitive Kind; the ſame Sort of Senſations of Mind (differing not in Degree, but only in Circumſtances) that we have by thoſe natural Principles which are common to us, with the Beaſts, *viz.* the five external Senſes. This is a low, miſerable Notion of ſpiritual Senſe, to ſuppoſe that 'tis only a conceiving or imagining that Sort of Ideas which we have by our animal Senſes: which Senſes the Beaſts have

have in as great Perfection as we; it is, as it were, a turning Christ, or the divine Nature in the Soul, into a meer Animal. There is nothing wanting the Soul, as it is by Nature, to render it capable of being the Subject of all these external Ideas, without any new Principles. A natural Man is capable of having an Idea, and a lively Idea of Shapes and Colours and Sounds when they are absent, and as capable as a regenerate Man is: So there is nothing supernatural in them. And 'tis known by abundant Experience, that 'tis not the advancing or perfecting human Nature, which makes Persons more capable of having such lively and strong imaginary Ideas, but that on the contrary, the Weakness of Body and Mind, and Distempers of Body, makes Persons abundantly more susceptive of such Impressions.*

As to a truly spiritual Sensation, not only is the Manner of its coming into the Mind extraordinary, but the Sensation itself is totally diverse from all that Men have, or can have, in a State of Nature, as has been shewn. But as to those external Ideas, though the Way of their coming into the Mind is sometimes unusual, yet the Ideas in themselves are not the better for that: they are still of no different Sort from what Men have by their Senses; they are of no higher Kind, nor a whit better. For Instance, the external Idea a Man has now of Christ hanging on the Cross, and shedding his Blood, is no better in itself, than the external Idea that *Jews* his Enemies had, who stood round his Cross and saw this with their bodily Eyes. The imaginary Idea which Men have now, of an external Brightness and Glory of God

* "Conceits and Whimseys abound most in Men of weak Reason; Children, and such as are crack'd in their Understanding have most of them; Strength of Reason banishes them, as the Sun does Mists and Vapours. But now the more rational any gracious Person is, by so much more is he fixed and settled and satisfied in the Grounds of Religion: Yea, there is the highest and purest Reason in Religion; and when this Change is wrought upon Men, it is carried on in a rational Way, *Isai.* i. 18. *John* xix. 9." *Flavel*'s Preparation for Sufferings, Chap. vi.

God, is no better than the Idea the wicked Congregation in the Wilderneſs had of the external Glory of the Lord at Mount *Sinai*, when they ſaw it with bodily Eyes; or any better than that Idea which Millions of curſed Reprobates will have of the external Glory of Chriſt at the Day of Judgment, who ſhall ſee, and have a very lively Idea of ten Thouſand Times greater external Glory of Chriſt, than ever yet was conceived in any Man's Imagination;* yea, the Image of Chriſt, which Men conceive in their Imaginations, is not in its own Nature, of any ſuperior Kind to the Idea the Papiſts conceive of Chriſt, by the beautiful and affecting Images of him which they ſee in their Churches; (though the Way of their receiving the Idea may not be ſo bad) nor are the Affections they have, if built primarily on ſuch Imaginations, any better than the Affections raiſed in the ignorant People, by the Sight of thoſe Images, which oftentimes are very great; eſpecially when theſe Images, through the Craft of the Prieſts, are made to move, and ſpeak, and weep, and the like.† Meerly the Way of

* "If any Man ſhould ſee, and behold Chriſt really, immediately, "this is not the ſaving Knowledge of him. I know the Saints do "know Chriſt as if immediately preſent; they are not Strangers by "their Diſtance: If others have ſeen him more immediately, I will "not diſpute it. But if they have ſeen the Lord Jeſus as immediately as if here on Earth, yet *Capernaum* ſaw him ſo; nay ſome "of them were Diſciples for a Time, and followed him, *John* vi. "And yet the Lord was hid from their Eyes. Nay, all the World "ſhall ſee him in his Glory, which ſhall amaze them; and yet this "is far ſhort of having the ſaving Knowledge of him, which the "Lord doth communicate to the Elect. So that tho' you ſee the "Lord ſo really, as that you become familiar with him, yet Luke xiii. "26. *Lord, have we not eat and drank*, &c.—and ſo periſh." *Shepard*'s par. of the ten Virgins, P. I. p. 197, 198.

† "*Satan* is transformed into an Angel of Light: And hence we "have heard that ſome have heard Voices; ſome have ſeen the very "Blood of Chriſt dropping on them, and his Wounds in his Side; "ſome have ſeen a great Light ſhining in the Chamber; ſome wonderfully affected with their Dreams; ſome in great Diſtreſs have "with

of Persons receiving these imaginary Ideas, don't alter the Nature of the Ideas themselves that are received: Let them be received in what Way they will, they are still but external Ideas, or Ideas of outward Appearances, and so are not spiritual. Yea, if Men should actually receive such external Ideas by the immediate Power of the most high God upon their Minds, they would not be spiritual, they would be no more than a common Work of the Spirit of God; as is evident in Fact, in the Instance of *Balaam*, who had impress'd on his Mind, by God himself, a clear and lively outward Representation or Idea of Jesus Christ, as *the Star rising out of* Jacob, when *he heard the Words of God, and knew the Knowledge of the most High, and saw the Vision of the Almighty, falling into a Trance*, Numb. xxiv. 16, 17. But yet had no Manner of spiritual Discovery of Christ; that Day-Star never spiritually rose in his Heart, he being but a natural Man.

And as these external Ideas have nothing divine or spiritual in their Nature, and nothing but what natural Men, without any new Principles, are capable of; so there is nothing in their Nature which requires that peculiar, inimitable and unparallel'd Exercise of the glorious Power of God, in order to their Production, which it has been shown, there is in the Production of true Grace. There appears to be nothing in their Nature above the Power of the Devil. 'Tis certainly not above the Power of *Satan* to suggest Thoughts to Men; because otherwise he could not tempt them to Sin. And if he can suggest any Thoughts or Ideas at all, doubtless imaginary ones, or Ideas of Things external are not above his

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"had inward Witness, *Thy Sins are forgiven*; and hence such "Liberty and Joy, that they are ready to leap up and down the "Chamber. O adulterous Generation! This is natural and usual "with Men, they would fain see Jesus, and have him present to give "them Peace; and hence Papists have his Images.——Wo to them "that have no other manifested Christ, but such an one." *Shepard's* Par. of the ten Virgins, P. I. p. 198.

his Power;* for the external Ideas Men have are the loweſt Sort of Ideas. Theſe Ideas may be raiſed only by Impreſſions made on the Body, by moving the animal Spirits, and impreſſing the Brain. Abundant Experience does certainly ſhow, that Alterations in the Body will excite imaginary or external Ideas in the Mind; as often, in Caſe of a high Fever, Melancholly, *&c.* Theſe external Ideas are as much below the more intellectual Exerciſes of the Soul, as the Body is a leſs noble Part of Man than the Soul.

And there is not only nothing in the Nature of theſe external Ideas or Imaginations of outward Appearances, from whence we can infer, that they are above the Power of the Devil; but it is certain alſo that the Devil can excite, and often hath excited ſuch Ideas. They were external Ideas which he excited in the Dreams and Viſions of the falſe Prophets of old, who were under the Influence of lying Spirits, that we often read of in Scripture, as *Deut.* xiii. 1. 1 *Kings* xxii. 22. *Iſai.* xxviii. 7. *Ezek.* xiii. 7. *Zech.* xiii. 4. And they were external Ideas that he often excited in the Minds of the heathen Prieſts, Magicians and Sorcerers, in their Viſions and Extaſies; and they were external Ideas that he excited in the Mind of the Man Chriſt Jeſus, when he ſhewed him all the Kingdoms of the World with the Glory of them, when thoſe Kingdoms we not really in Sight.

And if *Satan*, or any created Being, has Power to impreſs the Mind with outward Repreſentations, then no particular Sort of outward Repreſentations can be any Evidence of a divine Power. Almighty Power is no more requiſite to repreſent the Shape of Man to the Imagination, than the Shape of any Thing elſe: There is

* "Conſider how difficult, yea, and impoſſible it is to determine "that ſuch a Voice, Viſion, or Revelation is of God, and that *Satan* "cannot feign or counterfeit it; ſeeing he hath left no certain "Marks by which we may diſtinguiſh one Spirit from another." *Flavel*'s Cauſes and Cures of mental Errors, Cauſe 14.

is no higher Kind of Power neceſſary to form in the Brain one bodily Shape or Colour than another: It needs a no more glorious Power to repreſent the Form of the Body of Man, than the Form of a Chip or Block; though it be of a very beautiful human Body, with a ſweet Smile on his Countenance, or Arms open, or Blood running from Hands, Feet, and Side: That Sort of Power which can repreſent Black or Darkneſs to the Imagination, can alſo repreſent White and ſhining Brightneſs: The Power and Skill which can well and exactly paint a Straw, or a Stick of Wood, on a Piece of Paper or Canvas; the ſame in Kind, only perhaps further improved, will be ſufficient to paint the Body of a Man, with great Beauty and in Royal Majeſty, or a magnificent City, pav'd with Gold, full of Brightneſs, and a glorious Throne, *&c.* So 'tis no more than the ſame Sort of Power that is requiſite to paint one as the other of theſe on the Brain. The ſame Sort of Power that can put Ink upon Paper, can put on Leaf-Gold. So that it is evident to a Demonſtration, if we ſuppoſe it to be in the Devil's Power to make any Sort of external Repreſentation at all on the Fancy, (as without Doubt it is, and never any one queſtioned it who believed there was a Devil, that had any Agency with Mankind) I ſay, if ſo, it is demonſtrably evident that a created Power may extend to all Kinds of external Appearances and Ideas in the Mind.

From hence it again clearly appears, that no ſuch Things have any Thing in them that is ſpiritual, ſupernatural and divine, in the Senſe in which it has been proved that all truly gracious Experiences have. And though external Ideas, through Man's Make and Frame, do ordinarily in ſome Degree attend ſpiritual Experiences, yet theſe Ideas are no Part of their ſpiritual Experience, any more than the Motion of the Blood, and beating of the Pulſe, that attends Experiences, are a Part of ſpiritual Experience. And though undoubtedly, through Men's Infirmity in the preſent State, and eſpecially through

through the weak Conſtitution of ſome Perſons, gracious Affections which are very ſtrong, do excite lively Ideas in the Imagination; yet 'tis alſo undoubted, that when Perſon's Affections are *founded on* Imaginations, which is often the Caſe, thoſe Affections are merely natural and common, becauſe they are built on a Foundation that is not ſpiritual; and ſo are entirely different from gracious Affections, which, as has been proved, do evermore ariſe from thoſe Operations that are ſpiritual and divine.

Theſe Imaginations do oftentimes raiſe the carnal Affections of Men to an exceeding great Height:* And no

* There is a remarkable Paſſage of Mr. *John Smith*, in his Diſcourſe on the Shortneſs of a Phariſaic Righteouſneſs, p. 370, 371, of his Select Diſcourſes, deſcribing that Sort of Religion which is built on ſuch a Foundation as I am here ſpeaking of. I cannot forbear tranſcribing the Whole of it. Speaking of a Sort of Chriſtians, whoſe Life is nothing but a ſtrong Energy of Fancy, he ſays, "Leſt "their Religion might too groſly diſcover itſelf to be nothing elſe "but a Piece of Art, there may be ſometimes ſuch extraordinary "Motions ſtirred up within them, which may prevent all their own "Thoughts, that may ſeem to be a true Operation of the divine "Life; when yet all this nothing elſe but the Energy of their own "Self-love, touch'd with ſome fleſhly Apprehenſions of divine "Things, and excited by them. There are ſuch Things in our "chriſtian Religion, when a carnal unhallowed Mind takes the "Chair, and gets the expounding of them, may ſeem very delicious "to the fleſhly Appetites of Men; ſome Doctrines and Notions of "free Grace and Juſtification, the magnificent Titles of Sons of "God, and Heirs of Heaven, ever flowing Streams of Joy and "Pleaſure that bleſſed Souls ſhall ſwim in to all Eternity, a glorious "Paradiſe in the World to come, always ſpringing up with well-"ſcented and fragrant Beauties, a new *Jeruſalem* paved with Gold, "and beſpangled with Stars, comprehending in its vaſt Circuit ſuch "numberleſs Varieties, that a buſy Curioſity may ſpend itſelf about "to all Eternity. I doubt not but that ſometimes the moſt fleſhly "and earthly Men, that fly in their Ambition to the Pomp of this "World, may be ſo raviſhed with the Conceits of ſuch Things as "theſe, that they may ſeem to be made Partakers of the Powers of "the World to come. I doubt not but that they might be much "exalted with them, as the Souls of crazed or diſtracted Perſons "ſeem to be ſometimes, when their Fancies play with thoſe quick "and nimble Spirits, which a diſtemper'd Frame of Body, and un-natural

no wonder, when the Subjects of them have an ignorant, but undoubting Perswasion, that they are divine Manifestations, which the great Jehovah immediately makes to their Souls, therein giving them Testimonies, in an extraordinary Manner, of his high and peculiar Favour.

Again, it is evident from what has been observed and proved of the Manner in which gracious Operations and Effects in the Heart are spiritual, supernatural and divine, that

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" natural Heat in their Heads, beget within them. Thus may those " blazing Comets rise up above the Moon, and climb higher than " the Sun; which yet, because they have no solid Consistence of " their own, and are of a base and earthly Alloy, will soon vanish " and fall down again, being only borne up by an external Force. " they may seem to themselves to have attained higher than those " noble Christians, that are gently moved by the natural Force of " true Goodness: They seem to be *pleniores Deo*, [*i. e.* more full of " God] than those that are really informed and actuated by the divine " Spirit, and do move on steadily and constantly in the Way towards " Heaven. As the Seed that was sown in stony Ground, grew up, " and lengthen'd out in its Blade faster, than that which was sown " in the good and fruitful Soil. And as the Motions of our Sense " and Fancy and Passions, while our Souls are in this mortal Condi- " tion, sunk down deeply into the Body, are many Times more " vigorous, and make stronger Impressions upon us, than those of " the higher Powers of the Soul, which are more subtil, and remote " from these mixt and animal Perceptions: That Devotion which is " there seated, may seem to have more Energy and Life in it, than " that which gently, and with a more delicate Kind of Touch, " spreads itself upon the Understanding, and from thence mildly " derives itself through our Wills and Affections. But however, " the former may be more boisterous for a Time, yet this is of a " more consistent, spermatical and thriving Nature. For that pro- " ceeding indeed from nothing but a sensual and fleshly Apprehension " of God and true Happiness, is but of a flitting and fading Nature; " and as the sensible Powers and Faculties grow more languid, or " the Sun of divine Light shines more brightly upon us, these " earthly Devotions, like our culinary Fires, will abate their Heat " and Fervour. But a true celestial Warmth will never be extin- " guish'd, because it is of an immortal Nature; and being once " seated vitally in the Souls of Men, it will regulate and order all " the Motions of it in a due Manner; as the natural Heat, radi- " cated in the Hearts of living Creatures, hath the Dominion and " Œconomy of the whole Body under it. True Religion is no Piece " of

that the immediate ſuggeſting of the Words of Scripture to the Mind, has nothing in it which is ſpiritual.

I have had Occaſion to ſay ſomething of this already; and what has been ſaid may be ſufficient to evince it: But if the Reader bears in Mind what has been ſaid concerning the Nature of ſpiritual Influences and Effects, it will be more abundantly manifeſt that this is no ſpiritual Effect. For I ſuppoſe there is no Perſon of common Underſtanding, who will ſay or imagine, that the bringing Words (let them be what Words they will) to the Mind, is an Effect of that Nature which it is impoſſible the Mind of a natural Man, while he remains in a State of Nature, ſhould be the Subject of, or any Thing like it; or that it requires any new divine Senſe in the Soul; or that the bringing Sounds or Letters to the Mind, is an Effect of ſo high, holy, and excellent a Nature, that it is impoſſible any created Power ſhould be the Cauſe of it.

As the ſuggeſting Words of Scripture to the Mind, is only the exciting in the Mind Ideas of certain Sounds or Letters; ſo it is only one Way of exciting Ideas in the Imagination; for Sounds and Letters are external Things, that are the Objects of the external Senſes of Seeing and Hearing. Ideas of certain Marks upon Paper, ſuch as any of the Twenty-four Letters, in whatever Order, or any Sounds of the Voice, are as much external Ideas, as any of other Shapes or Sounds whatſoever: And therefore, by what has been already ſaid concerning theſe external Ideas, it is evident they are nothing ſpiritual; and if at any Time the Spirit of God

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" of Artifice; it is no boiling up of our imaginative Powers, nor " the glowing Heats of Paſſion; though theſe are too often miſtaken " for it, when in our Jugglings in Religion we caſt a Miſt before our " own Eyes: But it is a new Nature, in forming the Souls of Men; " it is a godlike Frame of Spirit, diſcovering itſelf moſt of all in " ſerene and clear Minds, in deep Humility, Meekneſs, Self-denial, " univerſal Love to God, and all true Goodneſs, without Partiality, " and without Hypocriſy, whereby we are taught to know God, " and knowing him to love him, and conform ourſelves as much as " may be, to all that Perfection which ſhines in him."

God suggests these Letters or Sounds to the Mind; this is a *common*, and not any *special* or *gracious* Influence of that Spirit. And therefore it follows from what has been already proved, that those Affections which have this Effect for their Foundation, are no spiritual or gracious Affections.—But let it be observed, what it is that I say, *viz.* When this Effect, even the immediate and extraordinary *Manner of Words of Scripture's coming to the Mind*, is that which excites the Affections, and is properly the Foundation of them, then these Affections are not spiritual. It may be so, that Persons may have gracious Affections going with Scriptures which come to their Minds, and the Spirit of God may make use of those Scriptures to excite them; when it is some spiritual Sense, Taste or Relish they have of the divine and excellent Things contained in those Scriptures, that is the Thing which excites their Affections, and not the extraordinary and sudden Manner of Words being brought to their Minds. They are affected with the Instruction they receive from the Words, and the View of the glorious Things of God or Christ, and Things appertaining to them, that they contain and teach; and not because the Words came suddenly, as though some Person had spoke them to them, thence concluding that God did as it were immediately speak to them. Persons oftentimes are exceedingly affected on this Foundation; the Words of some great and high Promises of Scripture come suddenly to their Minds, and they look upon the Words as directed immediately by God to them, as though the Words that Moment proceeded out of the Mouth of God as spoken to them: So that they take it as a Voice from God, immediately revealing to them their happy Circumstances, and promising such and such great Things to them: And this it is that affects and elevates them. There is no new spiritual Understanding of the divine *Things containned in the Scripture*, or new spiritual Sense of the glorious Things taught in that Part of the Bible, going before their Affection, and being

being the Foundation of it: All the new Underſtanding they have, or think they have, to be the Foundation of their Affection, is this, that the Words *are ſpoke to them*, becauſe they come ſo ſuddenly and extraordinarily. And ſo this Affection is built wholly on the Sand; becauſe it is built on a Concluſion for which they have no Foundation, For, as has been ſhown, the ſudden coming of the Words to their Minds, is no Evidence that the bringing them to their Minds in that Manner, was from God. And if it was true, that God brought the Words to their Minds, and they certainly knew it, that would not be ſpiritual Knowledge; it may be without any ſpiritual Senſe: *Balaam* might know that the Words which God ſuggeſted to him, were indeed ſuggeſted to him by God, and yet have no ſpiritual Knowledge. So that theſe Affections which are built on that Notion, that Texts of Scripture are ſent immediately from God, are built on no ſpiritual Foundation, and are vain and deluſive. Perſons who have their Affections thus raiſed, if they ſhould be enquired of, whether they have any new Senſe of the Excellency of Things contained in thoſe Scriptures, would probably ſay, *Yes*, without Heſitation: But it is true no otherwiſe than thus, that when they have taken up that Notion, that the Words are ſpoken immediately to them, that makes them ſeem ſweet to them, and they own the Things which theſe Scriptures ſay to them, for excellent Things, and wonderful Things. As for Inſtance, ſuppoſing theſe were the Words which were ſuddenly brought to their Minds, *Fear not,—it is your Father's good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom*; they having confidently taken up a Notion that the Words were, as it were immediately ſpoken from Heaven to them, as an immediate Revelation, that God was their Father, and had given the Kingdom to them, they are greatly affected by it, and the Words ſeem ſweet to them; and oh, they ſay, *they are excellent Things that are contained in thoſe Words!* but the Reaſon why the Promiſe ſeems excellent to them, is only becauſe

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they think it is made to them immediately: All the Senſe they have of any Glory in them, is only from Self-Love, and from their own imagined Intereſt in the Words: Not that they had any View or Senſe of the holy and glorious Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the ſpiritual Glory of that God who gives it, and of his excellent Grace to ſinful Men, in offering and giving them this Kingdom, of his own good Pleaſure, preceeding their imagined Intereſt in theſe Things, and their being affected by them, and being the Foundation of their Affection, and Hope of an Intereſt in them. On the contrary they firſt imagine they are intereſted, and then are highly affected with that, and then can own theſe Things to be excellent. So that the ſudden and extraordinary Way of the Scriptures coming to their Mind, is plainly the firſt Foundation of the Whole; which is a clear Evidence of the wretched Deluſion they are under.

The firſt Comfort of many Perſons, and what they call their Converſion, is after this Manner: After Awakening and Terrors, ſome comfortable ſweet Promiſe comes ſuddenly and wonderfully to their Minds; and the Manner of its coming makes them conclude it comes from God *to them:* And this is the very Thing that is all the Foundation of their Faith, and Hope, and Comfort: From hence they take their firſt Encouragement to truſt in God and in Chriſt, becauſe they think that God, by ſome Scripture ſo brought, has now already revealed to them that he loves them, and has already promiſed them eternal Life: Which is very abſurd; for every one of common Knowledge of the Principles of Religion, knows, that it is God's Manner to reveal his Love to Men, and their Intereſt in the Promiſes, after they have believed, and not before; becauſe they muſt firſt believe, before they have any Intereſt in the Promiſes to be revealed. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of Truth, and not of Lies: He don't bring Scriptures to Men's Minds to reveal to them that they have an Intereſt

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in God's Favour and Promiſes, when they have none, having not yet believed: Which would be the Caſe if God's bringing Texts of Scripture to Men's Minds to reveal to them that their Sins were forgiven, or that it was God's Pleaſure to give them the Kingdom, or any Thing of that Nature, went before, and was the Foundation of their firſt Faith. There is no Promiſe of the Covenant of Grace belongs to any Man, 'till he has firſt believed in Chriſt; for 'tis by Faith alone that we become intereſted in Chriſt, and the Promiſes of the new Covenant made in him: And therefore whatever Spirit applies the Promiſes of that Covenant to a Perſon who has not firſt believed, as being already his, muſt be a lying Spirit; and that Faith which is firſt built on ſuch an Application of Promiſes, is built upon a Lie. God's Manner is not to bring comfortable Texts of Scripture to give Men *Aſſurance* of his Love, and that they ſhall be happy, before they have had a Faith of *Dependance*.* And if the Scripture which comes to

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* Mr. *Stoddard*, in his Guide to Chriſt, Pa. 8, ſays, that "ſometimes Men, after they have been in Trouble a while, have ſome Promiſes come to them, with a great Deal of Refreſhing; and they hope God has accepted them:" And ſays, that "In this Caſe, the Miniſter may tell them, that God never gives a Faith of Aſſurance, before he gives a Faith of Dependance; for he never manifeſts his Love, 'till Men are in a State of Favour and Reconciliation, which is by Faith of Dependance. When Men have comfortable Scriptures come to them, they are apt to take them as Tokens of God's Love; but Men muſt be brought into Chriſt, by accepting the Offer of the Goſpel, before they are fit for ſuch Manifeſtations. God's Method is, firſt to make the Soul accept of the Offers of Grace, and then to manifeſt his good Eſtate unto him." And pa. 76, ſpeaking of them "that ſeem to be brought to lie at God's Foot, and give an Account of their cloſing with Chriſt, and that God has revealed Chriſt to them, and drawn their Hearts to him, and that they do accept of Chriſt," he ſays, "In this Caſe it is beſt to examine whether by that Light that was given him, he ſaw Chriſt and Salvation offered to him, or whether he ſaw that God loved him, or pardon'd him: for the Offer of Grace and our Acceptance goes before Pardon, and therefore much more, before the Knowledge of it."

Mr.

a Person's Mind, be not so properly a Promise as an Invitation; yet if he makes the sudden or unusual Manner of the Invitation's coming to his Mind, the Ground on which he believes that he is invited; it is not true Faith; because it is built on that which is not the true Ground of Faith. True Faith is built on no precarious Foundation; but a Determination that the Words of such a particular Text, were, by the immediate Power of God, suggested to the Mind, at such a Time, as though then spoken and directed by God to him, because the Words came after such a Manner, is wholly an uncertain and precarious Determination, as has been now shewn; and therefore is a false and sandy Foundation for Faith; and accordingly that Faith which is built upon it is false. The only certain Foundation which any Person has to believe that he is invited to partake of the Blessings of the Gospel, is, that the Word of God declares that Persons so qualified as he is, are invited, and God who declares it is true and cannot lie. If a Sinner be once convinced of the Veracity of God, and that the Scriptures are his Word, he'll need no more to convince and satisfy him that he is invited; for the Scriptures

Mr. *Shepard*, in his Parable of the ten Virgins, Part II. Page 15, says, That "Grace and the Love of Christ (the fairest Colours under "the Sun) may be pretended; but if you shall receive, under this "Appearance, that God witnesseth his Love, first by an absolute "Promise, take heed there; for under this Appearance, you may "as well bring in immediate Revelations, and from thence come to "forsake the Scriptures."

And in Part I. Pa. 86, he says, "Is Christ yours? Yes I see it. How? "By any Word or Promise! No: this is Delusion." And Pa. 136, speaking of them that have no solid Ground of Peace, he reckons, "Those that content themselves with the Revelation of the Lord's "Love, without the Sight of any Work, or not looking to it." And says presently after, "The Testimony of the Spirit does not make "a Man more a Christian, but only evidenceth it; as 'tis the Nature "of a Witness not to make a Thing to be true, but to clear and "evidence it." And Pa. 140, speaking of them that say they have the Witness of the Spirit, that makes a Difference between them and Hypocrites, he says, "The Witness of the Spirit makes not "the first Difference; for first a Man is a Believer, and in Christ, "and justified, called, and sanctified, before the Spirit does Wit-"ness it; else the Spirit should witness to an Untruth and Lie."

Scriptures are full of Invitations to Sinners, to the chief of Sinners, to come and partake of the Benefits of the Goſpel: He won't want any new ſpeaking of God to him, what he hath ſpoken already will be enough with him.

As the firſt Comfort of many Perſons, and their Affections at the Time of their ſuppoſed Converſion, are built on ſuch Grounds as theſe which have been mentioned; ſo are their Joys and Hopes, and other Affections, from Time to Time afterwards. They have often particular Words of Scripture, ſweet Declarations and Promiſes ſuggeſted to them, which by Reaſon of the Manner of their coming, they think are *immediately* ſent from God to them, *at that Time*; which they look upon as their Warrant to take them; and which they actually make the main Ground of their appropriating them to themſelves, and of the Comfort they take in them, and the Confidence they receive from them. Thus they imagine a kind of Converſation is carried on between God and them; and that God, from Time to Time, does, as it were, immediately ſpeak to them, and ſatisfy their Doubts, and teſtifies his Love to them, and promiſes them Supports and Supplies, and his Bleſſing in ſuch and ſuch Caſes, and reveals to them clearly their Intereſt in eternal Bleſſings. And thus they are often elevated, and have a Courſe of a ſudden and tumultuous Kind of Joys, mingled with a ſtrong Confidence, and high Opinion of themſelves; when indeed the main Ground of theſe Joys, and this Confidence is not any Thing *contained in*, or *taught by* theſe Scriptures, as they lie in the Bible, but the *Manner of their coming to them*; which is a certain Evidence of their Deluſion. There is no particular Promiſe in the Word of God that is the Saint's, or is any otherwiſe made to him, or ſpoken to him, than all the Promiſes of the Covenant of Grace are his, and are made to him, and ſpoken to him *: Tho' it be true that ſome of theſe Promiſes may be

* Mr. *Shepard*, in his Sound Believer, p. 159. of the late Impreſſion at *Boſton*, ſays, "Embrace in thy Boſom, not only ſome "few

be more peculiarly adapted to his Case than others; and God by his Spirit may enable him better to understand some than others, and to have a greater Sense of the Preciousness, and Glory, and Suitableness of the Blessings contained in them.

But here, some may be ready to say, What, is there no such Thing as any particular spiritual Application of the Promises of Scripture by the Spirit of God? I answer, There is doubtless such a Thing as a spiritual and saving Application of the Invitations and Promises of Scripture to the Souls of Men: But it is also certain, that the Nature of it is wholly misunderstood by many Persons, to the great ensnaring of their own Souls, and the giving *Satan* a vast Advantage against them, and against the Interest of Religion, and the Church of God. The spiritual Application of a Scripture Promise does not consist in its being immediately suggested to the Thoughts by some extrinsick Agent, and being borne into the Mind with this strong Apprehension, that it is particularly spoken and directed to them at that Time: There is nothing of the Evidence of the Hand of God in this Effect, as Events have proved in many notorious Instances; and it is a mean Notion of a spiritual Application of Scripture; there is nothing in the Nature of it at all beyond the Power of the Devil, if he be not restrained by God; for there is nothing in the Nature of the Effect that is spiritual, implying any vital Communication

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" few Promises, but all." And then he asks the Question, " When " may a Christian take a Promise without Presumption, as spoken to " him? He answers, " The rule is very sweet, but certain; when " he takes all the Scripture, and embraces it as spoken unto him, " he may then take any particular Promise boldly. My Meaning is, " when a Christian takes hold, and wrestles with God, for the Ac- " complishment of all the Promises of the New Testament, when he " sets all the Commands before him, as a Compass and Guide to " walk after, when he applies all the Threatnings to drive him near- " er unto Christ the End of them. This no Hypocrite can do; this " the Saints shall do; and by this they may know when the Lord " speaks in particular unto them."

munication of God. A truly ſpiritual Application of the Word of God is of a vaſtly higher Nature; as much above the Devil's Power, as it is, ſo to apply the Word of God to a dead Corpſe, as to raiſe it to Life; or to a Stone, to turn it into an Angel. A ſpiritual Application of the Word of God conſiſts in *applying it to the Heart*, in ſpiritually enlightning, ſanctifying Influences. A ſpiritual Application of an Invitation or Offer of the Goſpel conſiſts in giving the Soul a ſpiritual Senſe or Reliſh of the holy and divine Bleſſings offered, and alſo the ſweet and wonderful Grace of the Offerer, in making ſo gracious an Offer, and of his holy Excellency and Faithfulneſs to fulfil what he offers, and his glorious Sufficiency for it; ſo leading and drawing forth the Heart to embrace the Offer; and thus giving the Man Evidence of his Title to the Thing offered. And ſo a ſpiritual Application of the Promiſes of Scripture, for the Comfort of the Saints, conſiſts in enlightning their Minds to ſee the holy Excellency and Sweetneſs of the Bleſſings promiſed, and alſo the holy Excellency of the Promiſer, and his Faithfulneſs and Sufficiency; thus drawing forth their Hearts to embrace the Promiſer, and Thing promiſed; and by this Means, giving the ſenſible Actings of Grace, enabling them to ſee their Grace, and ſo their Title to the Promiſe. An Application not conſiſting in this divine Senſe and enlightning of the Mind, but conſiſting only in the Words being borne into the Thoughts, as if immediately then ſpoken, ſo making Perſons believe, on no other Foundation, that the Promiſe is theirs; is a blind Application, and belongs to the Spirit of Darkneſs, and not of Light.

When Perſons have their Affections raiſed after this Manner, thoſe Affections are really not raiſed by the Word of God; the Scripture is not the Foundation of them; 'tis not any Thing contained in thoſe Scriptures, which come to their Minds, that raiſe their Affections; but truly that Effect, *viz.* the ſtrange Manner of the Words being ſuggeſted to their Minds, and a Propoſi-

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tion from thence taken up by them, which indeed is not contained in that Scripture, nor any other; as that *his* Sins are forgiven him, or that it is the Father's good Pleasure to give *him in particular* the Kingdom, or the like. There are Propositions to be found in the Bible, declaring that Persons of such and such Qualifications are forgiven and beloved of God: But there are no Propositions to be found in the Bible, declaring that such and such particular Persons, independent on any previous Knowledge of any Qualications, are forgiven and beloved of God: And therefore when any Persons are comforted, and affected by any such Proposition, it is by another Word, a Word newly coin'd, and not any Word of God contained in the Bible.‡ And thus many Persons are vainly affected and deluded.

Again, it plainly appears from what has been demonstrated, *That no Revelation of secret Facts by immediated Suggestion*, is any Thing spiritual and divine, in that Sense wherein gracious Effects and Operations are so.

By *secret Facts*, I mean Things that have been done, or are come to pass, or shall hereafter come to pass, which are secret in that Sense, that they don't appear to the Senses, nor are known by any Argumentation, or any Evidence to Reason, nor any other Way, but only by that Revelation by immediate Suggestion of the Ideas of

‡ "Some Christians have rested with a Work without Christ, "which is abominable: But after a Man is in Christ, not to judge "by the Work, is first not to judge from a Word. For though "there is a Word, which may give a Man a *Dependance* on Christ, "without feeling any Work, nay, when he feels none, as absolute "Promises; yet no Word giving *Assurance*, but that which is made "to some Work; *He that believeth, or is poor in Spirit*, &c. 'Till that "Work is seen, has no Assurance from that Promise." *Shepard*'s Parable of the ten Virgins. Part I. Pa. 86.

"If God should tell a Saint that he has Grace, he might know it "by believing the Word of God: But it is not in this Way that "godly Men do know that they have Grace; it is not revealed in the "Word, and the Spirit of God doth not testify it to particular Per-"sons." *Stoddard*'s Nature of saving Conversion, Pa. 84, 85.

of them to the Mind. Thus for Inſtance, if it ſhould be revealed to me, that the next Year this Land would be invaded by a Fleet from *France*, or that ſuch and ſuch Perſons would then be converted, or that I myſelf ſhould then be converted; not by enabling me to argue out theſe Events from any Thing which now appears in Providence; but immediately ſuggeſting and bearing in upon my Mind, in an extraordinary Manner, the Apprehenſion or Ideas of theſe Facts, with a ſtrong Suggeſtion or Impreſſion on my Mind, that I had no Hand in myſelf, that theſe Things would come to paſs: Or if it ſhould be revealed to me, that this Day there is a Battle fought between the Armies of ſuch and ſuch Powers in *Europe*; or that ſuch a Prince in *Europe* was this Day converted, or is now in a converted State, having been converted formerly, or that one of my Neighbours is converted, or that I myſelf am converted; not by having any other Evidence of any of theſe Facts, from whence I argue them, but an immediate extraordinary Suggeſtion or Excitation of theſe Ideas, and a ſtrong Impreſſion of them upon my Mind: This is a Revelation of ſecret Facts by immediate Suggeſtion, as much as if the Facts were future; for the Facts being paſt, preſent, or future alters not the Caſe, as long as they are ſecret and hidden from my Senſes and Reaſon, and not ſpoken of in Scripture, nor known by me any other Way than by *immediate Suggeſtion*. If I have it reveal'd to me, that ſuch a Revolution is come to paſs this Day in the *Ottoman* Empire, it is the very ſame Sort of Revelation, as if it were revealed to me that ſuch a Revolution would come to paſs there this Day come Twelve-month; becauſe, though one is preſent and the other future, yet both are equally hidden from me, any other Way than by immediate Revelation. When *Samuel* told *Saul*, that the Aſſes which he went to ſeek were found, and that his Father had left caring for the Aſſes, and ſorrowed for him; this was by the ſame Kind of Revelation, as that by which he told *Saul*, that in the Plain of *Tabor*,

there should meet him three Men going up to God to *Bethel*, (1 *Sam.* x. 2, 3.) tho' one of these Things was future and the other was not. So when *Elisha* told the King of *Israel* the Words that the King of *Syria* spake in his Bed Chamber, it was by the same Kind of Revelation with that by which he foretold many Things to come.

'Tis evident by this Revelation of secret Facts by immediate Suggestion, has nothing of the Nature of a spiritual and divine Operation, in the Sense beforementioned: There is nothing at all in the Nature of the Preceptions or Ideas themselves, which are excited in the Mind, that is divinely excellent, and so, far above all the Ideas of natural Men; though the Manner of exciting the Ideas be extraordinary. In those Things which are spiritual, as has been shown, not only *the Manner of producing the Effect*, but *the Effect wrought*, is divine, and so vastly above all that can be in an unsanctified Mind. Now simply the having an Idea of Facts, setting aside the Manner of producing those Ideas, is nothing beyond what the Minds of wicked Men are susceptible of, without any Goodness in them; and they all, either have, or will have, the Knowledge of the Truth of the greatest and most important Facts, that have been, are, or shall be.

And as to the extraordinary Manner of producing the Ideas or Perception of Facts, even by immediate Suggestion, there is nothing in it, but what the Minds of natural Men, while they are yet natural Men, are capable of; as is manifest in *Balaam*, and others spoken of in the Scripture. And therefore it appears that there is nothing appertaining to this immediate Suggestion of secret Facts that is spiritual, in the Sense in which it has been proved that gracious Operations are so. If there be nothing in the Ideas themselves, which is holy and divine, and so nothing but what may be in a Mind not sanctified, then God can put them into the Mind *by immediate Power*, without sanctifying it. As there

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is nothing in the Idea of a Rainbow itſelf, that is of a holy and divine Nature; ſo that there is nothing hinders but that an unſanctified Mind may receive that Idea: So God, if he pleaſes, and when he pleaſes, *immediately, and in an extraordinary Manner*, may excite that Idea in an unſanctified Mind. So alſo, as there is nothing in the Idea or Knowledge that ſuch and ſuch particular Perſons are forgiven and accepted of God, and entitled to Heaven, but what unſanctified Minds may have and will have concerning many at the Day of Judgment; ſo God can if he pleaſes, extraordinarily and immediately ſuggeſt this to, and impreſs it upon an unſanctified Mind now: There is no Principle wanting in an unſanctified Mind, to make it capable of ſuch a Suggeſtion or Impreſſion; nor is there any Thing in them to exclude, or neceſſarily to prevent ſuch a Suggeſtion.

And if theſe Suggeſtions of ſecret Facts be attended with *Texts of Scripture*, immediately and extraordinarily brought to Mind, about ſome other Facts that ſeem in ſome Reſpects ſimilar, that don't make the Operation to be of a ſpiritual and divine Nature. For that Suggeſtion of Words of Scripture is no more divine, than the Suggeſtion of the Facts themſelves; as has been juſt now demonſtrated: And two Effects together, which are neither of them ſpiritual, can't make up one complex Effect, that is ſpiritual.

Hence it follows, from what has been already ſhewn, and often repeated, that thoſe Affections which are properly founded on ſuch immediate Suggeſtions, or ſuppoſed Suggeſtions of ſecret Facts, are not gracious Affections. Not but that it is poſſible that ſuch Suggeſtions may *be the Occaſion*, or *accidental Cauſe* of gracious Affections; for ſo may a Miſtake and Deluſion; but it is never properly the *Foundation* of gracious Affections: For gracious Affections, as has been ſhewn, are all the Effects of an Influence and Operation which is ſpiritual, ſupernatural, and divine. But there are many Affections, and high Affections, which ſome have, that have

such Kind of Suggestions or Revelations for their very Foundation: They look upon these as spiritual Discoveries; which is a gross Delusion; and this Delusion is truly the Spring whence their Affections flow.

Here it may be proper to observe, that 'tis exceeding manifest from what has been said, that what many Persons call the *Witness of the Spirit*, that they are the Children of God, has nothing in it spiritual and divine; and consequently that the Affections built upon it, are vain and delusive. That which many call the Witness of the Spirit, is no other than an immediate Suggestion and Impression of that Fact, otherwise secret, that they are converted, or made the Children of God, and so that their Sins are pardoned, and that God has given them a Title to Heaven. This Kind of Knowledge, *viz.* Knowing that a certain Person is converted, and delivered from Hell, and entitled to Heaven, is no divine Sort of Knowledge in itself. This Sort of Fact, is not that which requires any higher or more divine Kind of Suggestion, in order to impress it on the Mind, than any other Fact which *Balaam* had impress'd on his Mind. It requires no higher Sort of Idea or Sensation, for a Man to have the Apprehension of his own Conversion impress'd upon him, than to have the Apprehension of his Neighbour's Conversion, in like Manner, impress'd: : But God, if he pleased, might impress the Knowledge of this Fact, that he had forgiven his Neighbour's Sins, and given him a Title to Heaven, as well as any other Fact, without any Communication of his Holiness: The Excellency and Importance of the Fact, don't at all hinder a natural Man's Mind being susceptible of an immediate Suggestion and Impression of it. *Balaam* had as excellent, and important, and glorious Facts as this, immediately impress'd on his Mind, without any gracious Influence; as particularly, the coming of Christ, and his setting up his glorious Kingdom, and the Blessedness of the spiritual *Israel* in his peculiar Favour, and their Happiness living and dying. Yea

Abimelech

Abimelech, King of the Philiſtines, had God's ſpecial Favour to a particular Perſon, even *Abraham*, revealed to him, *Gen.* xx. 6, 7. So it ſeems that he reveal'd to *Laban* his ſpecial Favour to *Jacob*, ſee *Gen.* xxxi. 24, and *Pſal.* cv. 15. And if a truly good Man ſhould have an immediate Revelation or Suggeſtion from God, after the like Manner, concerning his Favour to his Neighbour, or himſelf; it would be no higher Kind of Influence; it would be no more than a common Sort of Influence of God's Spirit; as the Gift of Prophecy, and all Revelation by immediate Suggeſtion is; ſee 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2. And though it be true, that it is not poſſible, that a natural Man ſhould have that individual Suggeſtion from the Spirit of God, that he is converted, becauſe it is not true; yet that don't ariſe from the Nature of the Influence, or becauſe that Kind of Influence which ſuggeſts ſuch excellent Facts, is too high for him to be the Subject of; but purely from the Defect of a Fact to be revealed. The Influence which immediately ſuggeſts this Fact, when it is true, is of no different Kind from that which immediately ſuggeſts other true Facts: And ſo the Kind and Nature of the Influence, is not above what is common to natural Men, with good Men.

But this is a mean ignoble Notion of the Witneſs of the Spirit of God given to his dear Children, to ſuppoſe that there is nothing in the Kind and Nature of that Influence of the Spirit of God, in imparting the high and glorious Benefit but what is common to natural Men, or which Men are capable of, and be in the mean Time altogether unſanctified, and the Children of Hell; and that therefore the Benefit or Gift itſelf has nothing of the holy Nature of the Spirit of God in it, nothing of a vital Communication of that Spirit. This Notion greatly debaſes that high and moſt exalted Kind of Influence and Operation of the Spirit, which there is in the true Witneſs of the Spirit.* That which is called

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* The late venerable *Stoddard* in his younger Time, falling in with the Opinion of ſome others, received this Notion of the Witneſs of

the Witness of the Spirit, Rom. viii. is elsewhere in the new Testament, called *the Seal of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13, and iv. 13. alluding to the Seal of Princes, annexed to the Instrument, by which they advanced any of their Subjects to some high Honour and Dignity, or peculiar Privilege in the Kingdom, as a Token of their special Favour. Which is an Evidence that the Influence of the Spirit of the Prince of Princes, in sealing his Favourites, is far from being of a common Kind; and that there is no Effect of God's Spirit whatsoever, which is in its Nature more divine; nothing more holy, peculiar, inimitable and distinguishing of Divinity; as nothing is more Royal than the Royal Seal; nothing more sacred, that belongs to a Prince, and more peculiarly denoting what belongs to him; it being the very End and Design of it, to be the most peculiar Stamp and Confirmation of the Royal Authority, and great Note of Distinction, whereby that which proceeds from the King, or belongs to him, may be known from every Thing else, And therefore undoubtedly

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of the Spirit, by way of immadiate Suggestion; but in the latter Part of his Life, when he had more thoroughly weighed Things, and had more Experience, he entirely rejected it; as appears by his Treatise of the Nature of saving Conversion, p. 84. "The Spirit "of God doth not testify to particular Persons, that they are godly. "Some think that the Spirit of God doth testify it to some; and they "ground it on Rom. 8. 16. *The Spirit itself beareth Witness with our "Spirit, that we are the Children of God.* They think the Spirit re- "veals it by giving an inward Testimony to it; and some godly "Men think they have had Experience of it; But they may easily "mistake; when the Spirit of God doth eminently stir up a Spirit "of Faith, and sheds abroad the Love of God in the Heart, it is "easy to mistake it for a Testimony. And that is not the Meaning "of *Paul*'s Words. The Spirit reveals Things to us, by opening "our Eyes to see what is revealed in the Word; but the Spirit doth "not reveal new Truths, not revealed in the Word. The Spirit "discovers the Grace of God in Christ, and thereby draws forth "special Actings of Faith and Love, which are evidential; but it "doth not work in Way of Testimony. If God do but help us to "receive the Revelations in the Word, we shall have Comfort "enough without new Revelations."

edly the Seal of the great King of Heaven and Earth enſtamped on the Heart, is ſomething high and holy in its own Nature; ſome excellent Communication from the infinite Fountain of divine Beauty and Glory; and not meerly a making known a ſecret Fact by Revelation or Suggeſtion; which is a Sort of Influence of the Spirit of God, that the Children of the Devil have often been the Subjects of. The Seal of the Spirit is a Kind of Effect of the Spirit of God on the Heart, which natural Men, while ſuch, are ſo far from a Capacity of being the Subjects of, that they can have no Manner of Notion or Idea of it; agreeable to Rev. ii. 17. *To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden Manna; and I will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which no Man knoweth, ſaving he that receiveth it.* There is all Reaſon to ſuppoſe that what is here ſpoken of, is the ſame Mark, Evidence, or bleſſed Token of ſpecial Favour, which is elſewhere called the *Seal of the Spirit.*

What has miſled many in their Notion of that Influence of the Spirit of God we are ſpeaking of, is the Word WITNESS, it's being called the *Witneſs* of the Spirit. Hence they have taken it, not to be any Effect or Work of the Spirit upon the Heart, giving Evidence from whence Men may argue that they are the Children of God; but an inward immediate Suggeſtion, as tho' God inwardly ſpoke to the Man, and teſtified to him, and told him that he was his Child, by a Kind of a ſecret, Voice, or Impreſſion: Not obſerving the Manner in which the Word *Witneſs*, or *Teſtimony*, is often uſed in the New Teſtament; where ſuch Terms often ſignify, not only a meer declaring and aſſerting a Thing to be true, but holding forth Evidence from whence a Thing may be argued and proved to be true. Thus, *Heb.* ii. 4. God is ſaid to *bear Witneſs, with Signs and Wonders, and diverſe Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt.* Now theſe Miracles, here ſpoken of, are called God's Witneſs, not becauſe they are of the Nature of Aſſertions,

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but Evidences and Proofs. So Acts xiv. 3. *Long Time therefore, abode they speaking boldly in the Lord; which gave Testimony unto the Word of his Grace; and granted Signs and Wonders to be done by their Hands.* And John vi. 36. *But I have greater Witness than that of* John; *for the Works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same Works that I do, bear Witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.* Again, Chap. x. 25. *The Works that I do in my Father's Name, they bear Witness of me.* So the Water and the Blood are said to bear Witness, 1 *John* v. 8. Not that they spake or asserted any Thing, but they were Proofs and Evidences. So God's Works of Providence, in the Rain and fruitful Seasons, are spoken of as Witnesses of God's Being and Goodness, *i. e.* They were Evidences of these Things. And when the Scripture speaks of the *Seal* of the Spirit, it is an Expression which properly denotes, not an immediate Voice or Suggestion, but some Work or Effect of the Spirit, that is left as a divine Mark upon the Soul, to be an Evidence, by which God's Children might be known. The Seals of Princes were the distinguishing Marks of Princes: And thus God's Seal is spoken of as God's Mark, Rev. vii. 3. *Hurt not the Earth, neither the Sea, or the Trees, 'till we have sealed the Servants of our God in their Foreheads*; together with Ezek. ix. 4. *Set a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that sigh and cry for all the Abominations that are done in the Midst thereof.* When God sets his Seal on a Man's Heart by his Spirit, there is some holy Stamp, some Image impress'd and left upon the Heart by the Spirit, as by the Seal upon the Wax. And this holy Stamp, or impress'd Image, exhibiting clear Evidence to the Conscience, that the Subject of it is the Child of God, is the very Thing which in Scripture is called *the Seal of the Spirit*, and *the Witness*, or *Evidence of the Spirit.* And this Image instamp'd by the Spirit on God's Children's Hearts, is his own Image: That is the Evidence by which they are known to be God's Children, that they have

have the Image of their Father ſtamp'd upon their Hearts by the Spirit of Adoption. Seals anciently had engraven on them two Things, *viz.* The Image and the Name of the Perſon whoſe Seal it was. Therefore when Chriſt ſays to his Spouſe, Cant. viii. 6. *Set me as a Seal upon thine Heart, as a Seal upon thine Arm*; it is as much as to ſay, Let my Name and Image remain impreſt there. The Seals of Princes were wont to bear their Image; ſo that what they ſet their Seal and Royal Mark upon, had their Image left on it. It was the Manner of Princes of old to have their Image engraven on their Jewels and precious Stones; and the Image of *Auguſtus* engraven on a precious Stone, was uſed as the Seal of the Roman Emperors, in Chriſt's and the Apoſtles Times.* And the Saints are the Jewels of Jeſus Chriſt, the great Potentate, who has the Poſſeſſion of the Empire of the Univerſe: And theſe Jewels have his Image enſtamped upon them, by his Royal Signet, which is the Holy Spirit. And this is undoubtedly what the Scripture means by the Seal of the Spirit; eſpecially when it is enſtamped in ſo fair and clear a Manner, as to be plain to the Eye of Conſcience; which is what the Scripture calls *our Spirit*. This is, truly an Effect that is *ſpiritual*, *ſupernatural*, and *divine*. This is, in itſelf, of a holy Nature, being a Communication of the divine Nature and Beauty. That Kind of Influence of the Spirit which gives and leaves this Stamp upon the Heart, is ſuch that no natural Man can be the Subject of any Thing of the like Nature with it. This is the higheſt Sort of Witneſs of the Spirit, which it is poſſible the Soul ſhould be the Subject of: If there were any ſuch Thing as a Witneſs of the Spirit by immediate Suggeſtion or Revelation, this would be vaſtly more noble and excellent, and as much above it as the Heaven is above the Earth. This the Devil cannot imitate: As to an inward Suggeſtion of the Spirit of God, by a Kind of ſecret

* See *Chambers*'s Dictionary, under the Word ENGRAVING.

secret Voice speaking, and immediately asserting and revealing a Fact, he can do that which is a Thousand Times so like to this, as he can to that holy and divine Effect, or Work of the Spirit of God, which has been now spoken of.*

Another

* Mr. *Shepard* is abundant in militating against the Notion of Men's knowing their good Estate by an immediate Witness of the Spirit, without judging by any Effect or Work of the Spirit wrought on the Heart, as an Evidence and Proof that Persons are the Children of God. Parab. Part I. p. 134. "*Knowing your Election of* "*God.* How so? Immediately? Some Divines think Angels see it "not so, and that it is peculiar to God so to do; but mediately; "*for our Word came in Power, and in much Assurance,* to make you "enlarged for God, to turn you from Idols unto God, *&c*---". Again in the same Page "It is Heaven to cleave to him in every "Command; it is Death to depart from any Command. *Hereby* "*know we that we are in him.* If it were possible to ask of the An-"gels, how they know they are not Devils, they would answer, the "Lord's Will is ours. So here, how do you know you have not "the Nature of Devils, and so in a State of Devils, bound there "'till the Judgment of the great Day? Because God hath changed "our vile Natures, and made our Wills like unto his glorious Will". And p. 135. "The *Major* is the Word, the *Minor* Experience, and "the *Conclusion* the Lord's Spirit's Work, quickening your Spirits "to it. Now, say some, how do you know this? Thus you may "be mistaken; for many have been deceived thus. Grant that; "and shall a Child not take Bread when it is given him, though "Dogs snatch at it". And p. 137. "If you look to a Spirit with-"out a Work, whilst you do seek Consolation, you cannot avoid "the Condemnation of the Word. You say the Spirit has spoken "Peace to you; but do you love Christ? I look not to that; but to "the Spirit. Why, the Word saith, *He that loves him not, let him* "*be Anathema.* So, is the League between your Sins and your Souls "broken? Answ. I look not to that. Why, *John* saith, *He that* "*committeth Sin is of the Devil.* Are you new Creatures? I look not "to that. Why, the Word saith, *unless you be born again,* you can-"not enter into the Kingdom of God". Page 176, 177. "A Man "saith, I have Christ; and so have not they. I ask, where is the "Spirit? You have the Deed; where is the Seal? You have the "Testator; where is the Executor? The Spirit in you? Yes, I have "it; it has witnessed Christ is mine. Answ. It has witnessed; but "what has it wrought? Where is the Power of his Death, killing thy "Lusts? Where is the Life of the Spirit of Jesus in you? Where "is the Oil in your Vessel? Truly I look for the Bridegroom; but "I regard not that; neither are others to regard it, in Way of "Evidence.

Another Thing which is a full Proof that the Seal of the Spirit is no Revelation of any Fact by immediate Suggestion,

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"Evidence. Then I say the chief Evidence is destroyed in the "Churches. I have known many that have had Assurances; yet "never saw them prove right, 'till it witnessed this was here. What "should be the Causes of this, and that Men should make Blusters "in the Churches because of this, as though it was building on "Works? In several Men they are several. 1. An Aptness to out-"run the Truth, and to fall from one Extream to another---. 2. "The Apostacy of eminent Professors, who have been deceived in "their evidencing thus.--- 3. Corrupt Experience.--- 4. A Heart "that never felt the Bitterness and Bondage of Sin, as the greatest "Evil". Page 215, 216. "The Peace, and Joy, and Assurance "of that Glory, which Eye never saw, in the Saints, 'tis from the "Witness of the Spirit of Glory; not only because that God is "their God, but because they are his People. 'Tis I say from the "Witness of God in his Word; not from themselves, nor from Man "only, that they approve me; nor from Dreams, and diabolical "Breathings; but from the Spirit of God; he brings Tidings of "it; and from such a Spirit (that you may know it) that not only "shews you God is your God, and so you rejoice, because of this; for "thus 'tis with many a carnal Heart, and he hath Peace, being in "Horror, from this, *the Lord loves me*; but he makes you to re-"joice, because you are the Lord's People, because he hath chang-"ed your Heart: Now the Peace is sound, and Joy is right: And "here I would try the Peace of any Man". Part II. p. 168. 169. "All the Heirs of the Promises, as Heirs that have Legacies left "them, they go to the Will of the deceased Father; and that com-"forts, that they hold to, that is sure; such an one shall have it, if "his Name be there. But if one shall say, such a one hath promised "me such Lands; is it in his Will? No; but since he died, as I "was taking a Pipe, he came to me: Oh be not deceived!".

Again in his *Sound Believer*, there is a long Discourse of Sanctification as the chief Evidence of Justification, from p. 221, for many Pages following, I shall transcribe but a very small Part of it.---- "Tell me, how you will know that you are justified. You will say, "by the Testimony of the Spirit, And cannot the same Spirit shine "upon your Graces, and witness that you are sanctified, as well? 1 "*John* iv. 13. 24. 1 *Cor.* ii. 12. Can the Spirit make the one clear "to you, and not the other? Oh Beloved, it is a sad Thing, to hear "such Questions and such cold Answers also, that Sanctification pos-"sibly may be an Evidence. May be! Is it not certain? Assuredly "to deny it, is as bad as to affirm that God's own Promises of Fa-"vour are not true Evidences thereof, and consequently that they "are Lies and Untruths".

Mr.

Suggestion, but is Grace itself in the Soul, is that the *Seal of the Spirit* is called the *Earnest of the Spirit*, in the Scripture. 'Tis very plain, that the Seal of the Spirit is the same Thing with the Earnest of the Spirit, by 2 Cor. i. 22. *Who hath also sealed Us, and given the Earnest of the Spirit in our Hearts.* And Eph. i. 13, 14. *In*

Mr. *Flavel* also much opposes this Notion of the Witness of the Spirit by immediate Revelation. Sacramental Meditations, Med. 4. speaking of the Sealing of the Spirit, he says, "In Sealing the Believer, he doth not make use of an audible Voice, nor the Ministry of Angels, nor immediate and extraordinary Revelations; but "he makes use of his own Graces, implanted in our Hearts, and "his own Promises, written in the Scripture: And in this Method, "he usually brings the doubting trembling Heart of a Believer to "Rest and Comfort." Again, *Ibid.* "Assurance is produced in our "Souls by the reflexive Acts of Faith: The Spirit helps us to reflect "upon what hath been done by him formerly upon our Hearts; *hereby "we know that we know him*, 1 John ii. 3. To know that we know, "is a reflex Act. Now it is impossible there should be a reflex, before "there hath been a direct Act. No Man can have the Evidence of "his Faith, before the Habit is infused, and the vital Act perform'd. "The Object Matter, to which the Spirit seals, is his own sanctifying "Operation." Afterwards, *Ibid.* he says, "Immediate Ways of the "Spirit's Sealing are ceased. No Man may now expect, by any new "Revelation, or Sign from Heaven, by any Voice, or extraordinary "Inspiration, to have his Salvation sealed; but must expect that "Mercy in God's ordinary Way and Method, searching the Scriptures, examining our own Hearts, and waiting on the Lord in "Prayer. The learned *Gerson* gives an Instance of one that had been "long upon the Borders of Despair, and at last sweetly assured and "settled: He answered, *Non ex nova aliqua Revelatione*; not by any "new Revelation, but by subjecting my Understanding to, and comparing my Heart with the written Word. And Mr. *Roberts*, in his "Treatise of *the Covenants*, speaks of another, that so vehemently "panted after the Sealings and Assurance of the Love of God to his "Soul, that for a long Time he earnestly desired some Voice from "Heaven; and sometimes, walking in the solitary Fields, earnestly "desired some miraculous Voice from the Trees or Stones there. "This was denied him; but in Time, a better was afforded, in a "scriptural Way." Again, *Ibid.* "This Method of Sealing, is "beyond all other Methods in the World. For in miraculous Voices "and Inspirations, 'tis possible there may *subesse falsum*, be found "some Cheat, or Impostures of the Devil; but the Spirit's Witness "in the Heart, suitable to the Revelation in the Scripture, cannot "deceive us."

In whom, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy Spirit of Promiſe; which is the Earneſt of our Inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchaſed Poſſeſſion, unto the Praiſe of his Glory. Now the Earneſt is Part of the Money agreed for, given in Hand, as a Token of the Whole, to be paid in due Time; a Part of the promiſed Inheritance, granted now, in Token of full Poſſeſſion of the Whole hereafter. But ſurely that Kind of Communication of the Spirit of God, which is of the Nature of eternal Glory, is the higheſt and moſt excellent Kind of Communication, ſomething that is in its own Nature ſpiritual, holy and divine, and far from any Thing that is common; and therefore high above any Thing of the Nature of Inſpiration, or Revelation of hidden Facts by Suggeſtion of the Spirit of God, which many natural Men have had. What is the Earneſt and Beginning of Glory, but Grace itſelf, eſpecially in the more lively and clear Exerciſes of it? 'Tis not Prophecy, nor Tongues, nor Knowledge, but that more excellent divine Thing, *Charity that never faileth*, which is a Prelibation and Beginning of the Light, Sweetneſs, and Bleſſedneſs of Heaven, that World of Love or Charity. 'Tis Grace that is the Seed of Glory, and Dawning of Glory in the Heart, and therefore 'tis Grace that is the Earneſt of the future Inheritance. What is it that is the Beginning or Earneſt of eternal Life in the Soul, but ſpiritual Life? And what is that but Grace? The Inheritance that Chriſt has purchaſed for the Elect, is the Spirit of God; not in any extraordinary Gifts, but in his vital Indwelling in the Heart, exerting and communicating himſelf there, in his own proper, holy or divine Nature: And this is the Sum Total of the Inheritance that Chriſt purchaſed for the Elect. For ſo are Things conſtituted in the Affair of our Redemption, that the Father provides the Saviour, or Purchaſer, and the Purchaſe is made of him; and the Son is the Purchaſer and the Price; and the Holy Spirit is the great Bleſſing or Inheritance purchaſed, as is intimated

mated *Gal.* iii. 13, 14. and hence the Spirit is often spoken of as the Sum of the Blessings promised in the Gospel, *Luke* xxiv. 49. *Acts* i. 4, and Chap. ii. 38, 39. *Gal.* iii. 14. *Eph.* i. 13. This Inheritance was the grand Legacy which Christ left his Disciples and Church, in his last Will and Testament; *John* Chap. xiv. and xv. and xvi. This is the Sum of the Blessings of eternal Life, which shall be given in Heaven. (Compare *John* vii. 37, 38, 39. and *John* iv. 14, with *Rev.* xxi. 6, and xxii. 1, 17.) 'Tis through the vital Communications and Indwelling of the Spirit, that the Saints have all their Light, Life, Holiness, Beauty and Joy in Heaven: And 'tis through the vital Communications and Indwelling of the same Spirit, that the Saints have all their Light, Life, Holiness, Beauty, and Comfort on Earth; but only communicated in less Measure. And this vital Indwelling of the Spirit in the Saints, in this less Measure and small Beginning, is *the Earnest of the Spirit*, *the Earnest of the future Inheritance*, *and the first Fruits of the Spirit*, as the Apostle calls it, *Rom.* viii. 22, where, by *the first Fruits of the Spirit*, the Apostle undoubtedly means the same vital gracious Principle, that he speaks of in all the preceeding Part of the Chapter, which he calls Spirit, and sets in Opposition to Flesh or Corruption. Therefore this Earnest of the Spirit, and first Fruits of the Spirit, which has been shewn to be the same with the Seal of the Spirit, is the vital, gracious, sanctifying Communication and Influence of the Spirit, and not any immediate Suggestion or Revelation of Facts by the Spirit.* And

* "After a Man is in Christ, not to judge by the Work, is not to "judge by the Spirit. For the Apostle makes the Earnest of the "Spirit to be the Seal. Now Earnest is Part of the Money bargain'd "for; the Beginning of Heaven, of the Light and Life of it. He "that sees not that the Lord is his by that, sees no God his at all. "Oh therefore, do not look for a Spirit, without a Word to reveal, "nor a Word to reveal without seeing and feeling of some Work "first. I thank the Lord, I do but pity those that think otherwise. "If a Sheep of Christ, Oh, wander not." *Shepard's* Parable, P. I. Pa. 85.

And indeed the Apoſtle, when in that *Rom.* viii. 16, he ſpeaks of the Spirit's bearing Witneſs with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God, does ſufficiently explain himſelf, if his Words were but attended to. What is here expreſs'd, is connected with the two preceeding Verſes, as reſulting from what the Apoſtle had ſaid there, as every Reader may ſee. The three Verſes together are thus, *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God: For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father: The Spirit itſelf beareth Witneſs with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God.* Here, what the Apoſtle ſays, if we take it together, plainly ſhews, that what he has reſpect to, when he ſpeaks of the Spirit's giving us Witneſs or Evidence that we are God's Children; is his dwelling in us, and leading us, as a Spirit of Adoption, or Spirit of a Child, diſpoſing us to behave towards God as to a Father. This is the Witneſs or Evidence the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, that we *are Children*, that we *have the Spirit of Children*, or Spirit of Adoption. And what is that, but the Spirit of Love? There are two Kinds of Spirits the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, the Spirit of a Slave, or *the Spirit of Bondage*, that is *Fear*; and the Spirit of a Child, or *Spirit of Adoption*, and that is *Love*. The Apoſtle ſays, we have not received the Spirit of Bondage, or of Slaves, which is a Spirit of Fear; but we have received the more ingenious noble Spirit of Children, a Spirit of Love, which naturally diſpoſes us to go to God, as Children to a Father, and behave towards God as Children. And this is the Evidence or Witneſs which the Spirit of God gives us, that we are Children. This is the plain Senſe of the Apoſtle: And ſo undoubtedly the Apoſtle here is ſpeaking of the very ſame Way of caſting out Doubting, and *Fear*, and the Spirit of Bondage, which the Apoſtle *John* ſpeaks of, 1 *John* iv. 18. *viz.* By the prevailing of *Love*, that is the Spirit of a Child. The Spirit of Bondage works

by

by Fear, the Slave fears the Rod; but Love cries *Abba Father*; it disposes us to go to God, and behave ourselves towards God as Children; and it gives us clear Evidence of our Union to God as his Children, and so casts out Fear. So that it appears that the Witness of the Spirit the Apostle speaks of, is far from being any Whisper, or immediate Suggestion or Revelation; but that gracious holy Effect of the Spirit of God in the Hearts of the Saints, the Disposition and Temper of Children, appearing in sweet child-like Love to God, which casts out Fear, or a Spirit of a Slave.

And the same Thing is evident from all the Context: 'Tis plain the Apostle speaks of the Spirit, over and over again, as dwelling in the Hearts of the Saints, as a gracious Principle, set in Opposition to the Flesh, or Corruption: And so he does in the Words that immediately introduce this Passage we are upon, Verse 13. *For if ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die; but if ye, thro' the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Flesh, ye shall live.*

Indeed it is past Doubt with me, that the Apostle has a more special Respect to the Spirit of Grace, or the Spirit of Love, or Spirit of a Child, in its more lively Actings: For 'tis *perfect Love*, or *strong Love* only, which so witnesses or evidences that we are Children, as to cast out Fear, and wholly deliver from the Spirit of Bondage. The strong and lively Exercises of a Spirit of child-like, evangelical, humble Love to God, give clear Evidence of the Soul's Relation to God, as his Child; which does very greatly and directly satisfy the Soul, And tho' it be far from being true, that the Soul in this Case, judges only by an immediate Witness, without any Sign or Evidence; for it judges and is assured by the greatest Sign and clearest Evidence; yet in this Case, the Saint stands in no need of multiplied Signs, or any long Reasoning upon them. And tho' the Sight of his *relative Union* with God, and his being in his Favour, is not without a Medium, because he sees it by that Medium, *viz.* his Love; yet his Sight

of

of the *Union of his Heart* to God is immediate: Love, the Bond of Union, is seen intuitively: The Saint sees and feels plainly the Union between his Soul and God; it is so strong and lively, that he can't doubt of it. And hence he is assured that he is a Child. How can he doubt whether he stands in a child-like Relation to God, when he plainly sees a child-like Union between God and his Soul, and hence does boldly, and as it were, naturally and necessarily cry, *Abba Father?*

And whereas the Apostle says, the Spirit bears Witness *with our Spirits*; by *our Spirit* here, is meant our Conscience, which is called the Spirit of Man; Prov. xx. 27. *The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord, searching all the inward Parts of the Belly.* We elsewhere read of the Witness of this Spirit of ours; 2 Cor. i. 12. *For our rejoicing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience.* And 1 John iii. 19, 20, 21. *And hereby do we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him. For if our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all Things. Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God.* When the Apostle *Paul* speaks of the Spirit of God bearing Witness with our Spirit, he is not to be understood of two Spirits, that are two separate, collateral, independant Witnesses; but 'tis by one, that we receive the Witness of the other: The Spirit of God gives the Evidence, by infusing and shedding abroad the Love of God, the Spirit of a Child, in the Heart; and our Spirit, or our Conscience, receives and declares this Evidence of our Rejoicing.

Many have been the Mischiefs that have arisen from that false and delusive Notion of the Witness of the Spirit, that it is a Kind of inward Voice, Suggestion, or Declaration from God to a Man, that he is beloved of him, and pardoned, elected, or the like, sometimes with, and sometimes without a Text of Scripture; and many have been the false, and vain (though very high) Affections that have arisen from hence. And 'tis to be

feared that Multitudes of Souls have been eternally undone by it. I have therefore insisted the longer on this Head.

But I proceed now to a second Characteristic of gracious Affections.

II. The first objective Ground of gracious Affections, is the transcendently excellent and amiable Nature of divine Things, as they are in themselves; and not any conceived Relation they bear to Self, or Self-Interest.

I say, that the supremely excellent Nature of divine Things, is the *first*, or *primary and original* objective Foundation of the spiritual Affections of true Saints; for I do not suppose that all Relation which divine Things bear to themselves, and their own particular Interest, are wholly excluded from all Influence in their gracious Affections. For this may have, and indeed has, a secondary and consequential Influence in those Affections that are truly holy and spiritual; as I shall shew how by-and-by.

It was before observed, that the Affection of Love is as it were the Fountain of all Affection; and particularly, that Christian Love is the Fountain of all gracious Affections: Now the divine Excellency and Glory of God, and Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the Works of God, and the Ways of God, *&c.* is the primary Reason, why a true Saint loves these Things; and not any supposed Interest that he has in them, or any conceived Benefit that he has received from them, or shall receive from them, or any such imagined Relation, which they bear to his Interest, that Self-Love can properly be said to be the first Foundation of his Love to these Things.

Some say, that all Love arises from Self-Love; and that it is impossible in the Nature of Things, for any Man to have any Love to God, or any other Being, but that Love to himself must be the Foundation of it. But I humbly suppose it is for Want of Consideration,

that

that they say so. They argue, that whoever loves God, and so desires his Glory, or the Enjoyment of him, he desires these Things as his own Happiness; the Glory of God, and the beholding and enjoying his Perfections, are considered as Things *agreeable to him*, tending to make him happy; he places his Happiness in them, and desires them as Things, which (if they were obtained) would be delightful to him, or would fill him with Delight and Joy, and so make him happy. And so, they say, it is from Self-Love, or a Desire of his own Happiness, that he desires God should be glorified, and desires to behold and enjoy his glorious Perfections. But then they ought to consider a little further, and enquire how the Man came *to place his Happiness* in God's being glorified, and in contemplating and enjoying God's Perfections. There is no Doubt, but that after God's Glory, and the beholding his Perfections, are become so agreeable to him, that he places his highest Happiness in these Things, then he will desire them, as he desires his own Happiness. But how came these Things to be so agreeable to him, that he esteems it his highest Happiness to glorify God, *&c.?* Is not this the Fruit of Love? A man must first love God, or have his Heart united to him, before he will esteem God's Good his own, and before he will desire the glorifying and enjoying of God, as his Happiness. 'Tis not strong arguing, that because *after* a Man has his Heart united to God in Love, *as a Fruit of this*, he desires his Glory and Enjoyment as his own Happiness, that therefore a Desire of this Happiness of his own, must needs be the *Cause and Foundation* of his Love: Unless it be strong arguing, that because a Father begat a Son, that therefore his Son certainly begat him. If *after* a Man loves God, and has his Heart so united to him, as to look upon God as his chief Good, and on God's Good as his own, it will be a *Consequence and Fruit of this*, that even Self-Love, or Love to his own Happiness, will cause him to desire the glorifying and enjoying of God;

it will not thence follow, that this very Exercise of Self-Love, went *before* his Love to God, and that his Love to God was a *Consequence and Fruit of that*. Something else, entirely distinct from Self-Love might be the Cause of this, *viz*. A Change made in the Views of his Mind, and Relish of his Heart; whereby he apprehends a Beauty, Glory, and supreme Good in God's Nature, as it is in itself. This may be the Thing that first draws his Heart to him, and causes his Heart to be united to him, prior to all Considerations of his own Interest or Happiness, although after this, and as a Fruit of this, he necessarily seeks his Interest and Happiness in God.

There is such a Thing, as a kind of Love or Affection that a Man may have towards Persons or Things, which *does properly arise* from Self-love; a preconceived Relation to himself, or some Respect already manifested by another to him, or some Benefit already received or depended on, *is truly the first Foundation* of his Love, and what his Affection does wholly arise from; and is what preceeds any Relish of, or Delight in the Nature and Qualities inherent in the Being beloved, as beautiful and amiable. When the first Thing that draws a Man's Benevolence to another, is the beholding those Qualifications and Properties in him, which appear to him lovely in themselves, and the subject of them, on this Account, worthy of Esteem and Good-will; Love arises in a very different Manner, than when it first arises from some Gift bestowed by another, or depended on from him; as a Judge loves and favours a Man that has bribed him; or from the Relation he supposes another has to him, as a Man who loves another because he looks upon him as his Child. When Love to another arises thus, it does truly and properly arise from Self-love.

That kind of Affection to God or Jesus Christ, which does thus properly arise from Self-love, cannot be a truly gracious and spiritual Love; as appears from what has been said already: For Self-love is a Principle entirely natural, and as much in the Hearts of Devils as Angels;

and

and therefore, ſurely nothing that is the meer Reſult of it, can be ſupernatural and divine, in the Manner before deſcribed † Chriſt plainly ſpeaks of this Kind of Love, as what is nothing beyond the Love of wicked Men, Luke vi. 32. *If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for Sinners alſo love thoſe that love them.* And the Devil himſelf knew, that that Kind of Reſpect to God which was ſo mercenary, as to be only for Benefits received or depended on, (which is all one) is worthleſs in the Sight of God; otherwiſe he never would have made Uſe of ſuch Slander before God, againſt *Job*, as in Job i. 9, 10. *Doth* Job *ſerve God for nought? Haſt thou not made an Hedge about him, and about his Houſe,* &c.----? Nor would God ever have implicitly allowed the Objection to have been good, in caſe the Accuſation had been true, by allowing that that Matter ſhould be tried, and that *Job* ſhould be ſo dealt with, that it might appear in the Event, whether *Job*'s Reſpect to God was thus mercenary or no, and by putting the Proof of the Sincerity and Goodneſs of his Reſpect, upon that Iſſue.

'Tis unreaſonable to think otherwiſe, than that the firſt Foundation of a true Love to God, is that whereby he is in himſelf lovely, or worthy to be loved, or the ſupreme Lovelineſs of his Nature. This is certainly what makes him chiefly amiable. What chiefly makes a Man, or any Creature lovely, is his Excellency; and ſo what chiefly renders God lovely, and muſt undoubtedly be the chief Ground of true Love, is his Excellency. God's Nature, or the Divinity, is infinitely excellent; yea 'tis infinite Beauty, Brightneſs and Glory itſelf. But how can that be *true Love* of this excellent and lovely Nature, which is not built on the Foundation of *it's true Lovelineſs?* How can that be true Love of Beauty

† "There is a natural Love to Chriſt, as to one that doth thee "Good, and for thine own Ends; and ſpiritual, for himſelf, where- "by the Lord only is exalted." *Shepard*'s Parable of the ten Virgins, Part I. p. 25.

Beauty and Brightneſs, which is not for Beauty and Brightneſs ſake? How can that be a true Prizing of that which is in itſelf infinitely worthy and precious, which is not for the Sake of its Worthineſs and Preciouſneſs? This infinite Excellency of the divine Nature, as it is in itſelf, is the true Ground of all that is good in God in any Reſpect; but how can a Man truly and rightly love God, without loving him for that Excellency in him, which is the Foundation of all that is in any Manner of Reſpect good or deſireable in him? They whoſe Affection to God is founded firſt on his Profitableneſs to them, their Affection begins at the wrong End; they regard God only for the utmoſt Limit of the Stream of divine Good, where it touches them, and reaches their Intereſt; and have no Reſpect to that infinite Glory of God's Nature, which is the original Good, and the true Fountain of all Good, the firſt Fountain of all Lovelineſs of every kind, and ſo the firſt Foundation of all true Love.

A natural Principle of Self-love may be the Foundation of great Affections towards God and Chriſt, without ſeeing any Thing of the Beauty and Glory of the divine Nature. There is a certain Gratitude that is a meer natural Thing. Gratitude is one of the natural Affections of the Soul of Man, as well as Anger; and there is a Gratitude that ariſes from Self-love, very much in the ſame Manner that Anger does, Anger in Men is an Affection excited *againſt* another, or in Oppoſition to another, for ſomething in him that croſſes Self-love: Gratitude is an Affection one has *towards* another, for loving him, or gratifying him, or for ſomething in him that ſuits Self-love. And there may be a kind of Gratitude, without any true or proper Love; as there may be Anger without any proper Hatred, as in Parents towards their Children, that they may be angry with, and yet at the ſame Time have a ſtrong habitual Love to them. This Gratitude is the Principle which is in exerciſe in wicked Men, in that which Chriſt declares concerning

cerning them, in the 6th of *Luke*, where he ſays, *Sinners love thoſe that love them*; and which he declares concerning even the *Publicans*, who were ſome of the moſt carnal and profligate Sort of Men, *Matth.* v. 46. This is the very Principle that is wrought upon by Bribery, in unjuſt Judges; and it is a Principle that even the brute Beaſts do exerciſe: A Dog will love his Maſter that is kind to him. And we ſee in innumerable Inſtances, that meer Nature is ſufficient to excite Gratitude in Men, or to affect their Hearts with Thankfulneſs to others for Kindneſſes received; and ſometimes towards them, whom at the ſame Time they have an habitual Enmity againſt. Thus *Saul* was once and again greatly affected, and even diſſolved with Gratitude towards *David*, for ſparing his Life; and yet remained an habitual Enemy to him. And as Men, from meer Nature, may be thus affected towards Men; ſo they may towards God. There is nothing hinders, but that the ſame Self-love may work after the ſame Manner towards God, as towards Men. And we have manifeſt Inſtances of it in Scripture; as in the Children of *Iſrael*, *who ſang God's Praiſes* at the Red Sea, *but ſoon forgat God's Works*; and in *Naaman* the *Syrian*, who was greatly affected with the miraculous Cure of his Leproſy, ſo as to have his Heart engaged thenceforward to worſhip the God that had heal'd him, and him only, excepting when it would expoſe him to be ruin'd in his temporal Intereſt. So was *Nebuchadnezzer* greatly affected with God's Goodneſs to him, in reſtoring him to his Reaſon and Kingdom, after his dwelling with the Beaſts.

Gratitude being thus a natural Principle, it renders Ingratitude ſo much the more vile and heinous; becauſe it ſhews a dreadful Prevalence of Wickedneſs, when it even overbears, and ſuppreſſes the better Principles of human Nature: As it is mentioned as an Evidence of the high Degree of the Wickedneſs of many of the Heathen, that they were *without natural Affection*, Rom.

ii. 31. But that the Want of Gratitude, or natural Affection, are Evidences of an high Degree of *Vice*, is no Argument that all Gratitude and natural Affection, has the Nature of *Vertue*, or *Saving-Grace*.

Self-love, through the Exercise of a meer natural Gratitude, may be the Foundation of a Sort of Love to God many Ways. A Kind of Love may arise from a false Notion of God, that Men have been educated in, or have some Way imbibed; as tho' he were only Goodness and Mercy, and no revenging Justice; or as tho' the Exercises of his Goodness were necessary, and not free and sovereign; or as tho' his Goodness were dependant on what is in them, and as it were constrained by them. Men on such Grounds as these, may love a God of their own forming in their Imaginations, when they are far from loving such a God as reigns in Heaven.

Again, Self-love may be the Foundation of an Affection in Men towards God, thro' a great Insensibility of their State with Regard to God, and for Want of Conviction of Conscience to make 'em sensible how dreadfully they have provoked God to Anger; they have no Sense of the Heinousness of Sin, as against God, and of the infinite and terrible Opposition of the holy Nature of God against it: And so having formed in their Minds such a God as suits them, and thinking God to be such an one as themselves, who favours and agrees with them, they may like him very well, and feel a Sort of Love to him, when they are far from loving the true God. And Men's Affections may be much moved towards God, from Self-love, by some remarkable outward Benefits received from God; as it was with *Naaman*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, and the Children of *Israel* at the *Red Sea*.

Again, a very high Affection towards God, may, and often does arise in Men, from an Opinion of the Favour and Love of God to them, as the first Foundation of their Love to him. After Awakenings and Distress through Fears of Hell, they may suddenly get

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a Notion, through some Impression on their Imagination, or immediate Suggestion, with or without Texts of Scripture, or by some other Means, that God loves 'em and has forgiven their Sins, and made them his Children; and this is the the first Thing that causes their Affections to flow towards God and Jesus Christ: And then after this, and upon this Foundation, many Things in God may appear lovely to them, and Christ may seem excellent. And if such Persons are asked, whether God appears lovely and amiable in himself? They would perhaps readly answer, Yes; when indeed, if the Matter be strictly examined, this good Opinion of God was purchased and paid for before ever they afforded it, in the distinguishing and infinite Benefits they imagined they received from God; and they allow God to be lovely in himself, no otherwise than that he has forgiven them, and accepted them, and loves them above most in the World, and has engaged to emprove all his infinite Power and Wisdom in preferring, dignifying and exalting them, and will do for 'em just as they would have him. When once they are firm in this Apprehension, 'tis easy to own God and Christ to be lovely and glorious, and to admire and extol them. 'Tis easy for them to own Christ to be a lovely Person, and the best in the World, when they are first firm in it, that he, tho' Lord of the Universe, is captivated with Love to them, and has his Heart swallowed up in them, and prizes 'em far beyond most of their Neighbours, and loved 'em from Eternity, and died for 'em, and will make 'em reign in eternal Glory with him in Heaven. When this is the Case with carnal Men, their very Lusts will make him seem lovely: Pride itself will prejudice them in Favour of that which they call Christ: Selfish proud Man naturally calls that lovely that greatly contributes to his Interest, and gratifies his Ambition.

And as this Sort of Persons begin, so they go on: Their Affections are raised from time to time, primarily on this Foundation of Self-love, and a Conceit of God's

Love

Love to them. Many have a false Notion of Communion with God, as tho' it were carried on by Impulses and Whispers, and external Representations, immediately made to their Imagination. These Things they often have; which they take to be Manifestations of God's great Love to 'em, and Evidences of their high Exaltation above others of Mankind; and so their Affections are often renewedly set a going.

Whereas the Exercises of true and holy Love in the Saints arise in another Way. They don't first see that God loves them, and then see that he is lovely; but they first see that God is lovely, and that Christ is excellent and glorious, and their Hearts are first captivated with this View, and the Exercises of their Love are wont from time to time to begin here, and to arise primarily from these Views; and then, consequentially, they see God's Love; and great Favour to them.‖ The Saint's Affections begin with God; and Self love has a hand in these Affections consequentially, and secondarily only. On the contrary, those false Affections begin with self, and an Acknowledgment of an Excellency in God, and an Affectedness with it, is only consequential and dependant. In the Love of the true Saint God is the lowest Foundation; the Love of the Excellency of his Nature, is the Foundation of all the Affections which come afterwards, wherein Self-Love is concern'd as an Handmaid: On the contrary, the Hypocrite lays himself at the Bottom of all, as the first Foundation, and lays on God as the Superstructure; and even his Acknowledgement of God's Glory itself, depends on his Regard to his private Interest.

Self-Love may not only influence Men, so as to cause them to be affected with God's Kindness to them separately

‖ "There is a seeing of Christ, after a Man believes, which "is Christ in his Love, &c. But I speak of that first Sight "of him that preceeds the second Act of Faith; and 'tis an intuitive, "or real Sight of him, as he is in his Glory." *Shepard*'s Parable of the ten Virgins, Part I. pa. 74.

rately; but also with God's Kindness to them, as Parts of a Community: As a natural Principle of Self-Love, without any other Principle, may be sufficient to make a Man concerned for the Interest of the Nation to which he belongs: As for Instance, in the present War: Self-Love may make natural Men rejoice at the Successes of our Nation, and sorry for their Disadvantages, they being concerned as Members of the Body. So the same natural Principles may extend further, and even to the World of Mankind, and might he affected with the Benefits the Inhabitants of the Earth have, beyond those of the Inhabitants of other Planets; if we knew that such there were, and knew how it was with them. So this Principle may cause Men to be affected with the Benefits that Mankind have received beyond the fallen Angels. And hence Men, from this Principle, may be much affected with the wonderful Goodness of God to Mankind, his great Goodness in giving his Son to die for fallen Man, and the marvellous Love of Christ in suffering such great Things for us, and with the great Glory they hear God has provided in Heaven for us; looking on themselves as Persons concerned and interested, as being some of this Species of Creatures, so highly favour'd: The same Principle of natural Gratitude may influence Man here, as in the Case of personal Benefits.

But these Things that I have said do by no Means imply that all Gratitude to God is a meer natural Thing, and that there is no such Thing as a spiritual Gratitude, which is a holy and divine Affection: They imply no more, than that there is a Gratitude which is meerly natural, and that when Persons have Affections towards God only, or primarily for Benefits received, their Affection is only the Exercise of a natural Gratitude. There is doubtless such a Thing as a gracious Gratitude, which does greatly differ from all that Gratitude which natural Men experience. It differs in the following Respects:

1. True

1. True Gratitude or Thankfulneſs to God for his Kindneſs to us, ariſes from a Foundation laid before, of Love to God for what he is in himſelf; whereas a natural Gratitude has no ſuch antecedent Foundation. The gracious Stirrings of grateful Affection to God, for Kindneſs received, always are from a Stock of Love already in the Heart, eſtabliſhed in the firſt Place on other Grounds, *viz.* God's own Excellency; and hence the Affections are diſpoſed to flow out, on Occaſions of God's Kindneſs. The Saint having ſeen the Glory of God, and his Heart overcome by it, and captivated into a ſupreme Love to him on that Account, his Heart hereby becomes tender, and eaſily affected with Kindneſſes received. If a Man has no Love to another, yet Gratitude may be moved by ſome extraordinary Kindneſs; as in *Saul* towards *David:* But this is not the ſame Kind of Thing, as a Man's Gratitude to a dear Friend, that his Heart was before poſſeſs'd with a high Eſteem of, and Love to; whoſe Heart by this Means became tender towards him, and more eaſily affected with Gratitude, and affected in another Manner. Self-Love is not excluded from a gracious Gratitude; the Saints love God for his Kindneſs to them, Pſalm cxvi. 1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard the Voice of my Supplication.* But ſomething elſe is included; and another Love prepares the Way, and lays the Foundation, for theſe grateful Affections.

2. In a gracious Gratitude, Men are affected with the Attribute of God's Goodneſs and free Grace, not only as they are concerned in it, or as it affects their Intereſt, but as a Part of the Glory and Beauty of God's Nature. That wonderful and unparallel'd Grace of God, which is manifeſted in the Work of Redemption, and ſhines forth in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt, is infinitely glorious in itſelf, and appears ſo to the Angels; 'tis a great Part of the moral Perfection and Beauty of God's Nature: This would be glorious, whether it were exerciſed

ciſed towards us or no; and the Saint who exerciſes a gracious Thankfulneſs for it, ſees it to be ſo, and delights in it as ſuch; tho' his Concern in it ſerves the more to engage his Mind, and raiſe the Attention and Affection; and Self-Love here aſſiſts as an Handmaid, being ſubſervient to higher Principles, to lead forth the Mind to the View and Contemplation, and engage and fix the Attention, and heighten the Joy and Love: God's Kindneſs to them is a Glaſs that God ſets before them, wherein to behold the Beauty of the Attribute of God's Goodneſs: The Exerciſes and Diſplays of this Attribute, by this Means, are brought near to them, and ſet right before them. So that in a holy Thankfulneſs to God, the Concern our Intereſt has in God's Goodneſs, is not the firſt Foundation of our being affected with it; that was laid in the Heart before, in that Stock of Love which was to God, for his Excellency in himſelf, that makes the Heart tender, and ſuſceptive of ſuch Impreſſions from his Goodneſs to us: Nor is our own Intereſt, or the Benefits we have received, the only or the chief objective Ground of the preſent Exerciſes of the Affection: but God's Goodneſs, as Part of the Beauty of his Nature; although the Manifeſtations of that lovely Attribute, ſet immediately before our Eyes, in the Exerciſes of it for us, be the ſpecial Occaſion of the Mind's Attention to that Beauty, at that Time, and ſerves to fix the Attention, and heighten the Affection.

Some may perhaps be ready to object againſt the Whole that has been ſaid, that Text, John iv. 19. *We love him becauſe he firſt loved us*, as tho' this implied that God's Love to the true Saints were the *firſt Foundation* of their Love to him.

In Anſwer to this I would obſerve, that the Apoſtle's Drift in theſe Words, is to magnify the Love of God to us from hence, that he loved us, while we had no Love to him; as will be manifeſt to any one who compares this Verſe, and the two following, with the 9th, 10th, and 11th Verſes. And that God loved us, when we had

had no Love to him, the Apoſtle proves by this Argument, that God's Love to the Elect, is the Ground of their Love to him. And that it is three Ways. 1. The Saints Love to God, is the Fruit of God's Love to them; as it is the Gift of that Love. God gave them a Spirit of Love to him, becauſe he loved them from Eternity. And in this Reſpect God's Love to his Elect is the firſt Foundation of their Love to him, as it is the Foundation of their Regeneration, and the Whole of their Redemption. 2. The Exerciſes and Diſcoveries that God has made of his wonderful Love to ſinful Men, by Jeſus Chriſt, in the Work of Redemption, is one of the chief Manifeſtations, which God has made of the Glory of his moral Perfection, to both Angels and Men; and ſo is one main objective Ground of the Love of both to God; in a good Conſiſtence with what was ſaid before. 3. God's Love to a particular elect Perſon, diſcovered by his Converſion, is a great Manifeſtation of God's moral Perfection and Glory to him, and a proper Occaſion of the Excitation of the Love of holy Gratitude, agreeable to what was before ſaid. And that the Saints do in theſe Reſpects love God, becauſe he firſt loved them, fully anſwers the Deſign of the Apoſtle's Argument in that Place. So that no good Argument can be drawn from hence, againſt a ſpiritual and gracious Love in the Saints, ariſing primarily from the Excellency of divine Things, as they are in themſelves, and not from any conceived Relation they bear to their Intereſt.

And as it is with the Love of the Saints, ſo it is with their Joy, and ſpiritual Delight and Pleaſure; the firſt Foundation of it is not any Conſideration or Conception of their Intereſt in divine Things; but it primarily conſiſts in the ſweet Entertainment their Minds have in the View or Contemplation of the divine and holy Beauty of theſe Things, as they are in themſelves. And this is indeed the very main Difference between the Joy of the Hypocrite, and the Joy of the true Saint. The former rejoices

rejoices in himſelf: Self is the firſt Foundation of his Joy: The latter rejoices in God. The Hypocrite has his Mind pleaſed and delighted, in the firſt Place, with his own Privilege, and the Happineſs which he ſuppoſes he has attained to, or ſhall attain to. True Saints have their Minds, in the firſt Place, inexpreſſibly pleaſed and delighted with the ſweet Ideas of the glorious and amiable Nature of the Things of God. And this is the Spring of all their Delights, and the Cream of all their Pleaſures: 'tis the Joy of their Joy. This ſweet and raviſhing Entertainment, they have in the View of the beautiful and delightful Nature of divine Things, is the Foundation of the Joy that they have afterwards in the Conſideration of their being theirs. But the Dependance of the Affections of Hypocrites is in a contrary Order: They firſt rejoice, and are elevated with it, that they are made ſo much of by God; and then on that Ground he ſeems in a ſort lovely to them.

The firſt Foundation of the Delight a true Saint has in God, is his own Perfection; and the firſt Foundation of the Delight he has in Chriſt, is his own Beauty; he appears in himſelf the Chief among Ten Thouſand, and altogether lovely: The Way of Salvation by Chriſt, is a delightful Way to him; for the ſweet and admirable Manifeſtations of the divine Perfections in it; the holy Doctrines of the Goſpel, by which God is exalted and Man abaſed, Holineſs honoured and promoted, and Sin greatly diſgraced and diſcouraged, and free and ſovereign Love manifeſted; are glorious Doctrines in his Eyes, and ſweet to his Taſte, prior to any Conception of his Intereſt in theſe Things. Indeed the Saints rejoice in their Intereſt in God, and that Chriſt is their's; and ſo they have great Reaſon; but this is not the firſt Spring of their Joy: They firſt rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himſelf, and then ſecondarily rejoice in it, that ſo glorious a God is their's: They firſt have their Hearts fill'd with Sweetneſs, from the View of Chriſt's Excellency, and the Excellency of his Grace, and the

Beauty

Beauty of the Way of Salvation by him; and then they have a secondary Joy, in that so excellent a Saviour, and such excellent Grace is their's.* But that which is the true Saint's Superstructure, is the Hypocrite's Foundation. When they hear of the wonderful Things of the Gospel, of God's great Love in sending his Son, of Christ's dying Love to Sinners, and the great Things Christ has purchased, and promised to the Saints, and hear these Things livelily and eloquently set forth; they may hear with a great deal of Pleasure, and be lifted up with what they hear; but if their Joy be examined, it will be found to have no other Foundation than this, that they look upon these Things as their's, all this exalts them, they love to hear of the great Love of Christ so vastly distinguishing some from others; for Self-Love, and even Pride itself, makes them affect great Distinction from others: No Wonder, in this confident Opinion of their own good Estate, that they feel well under such Doctrine, and are pleased in the highest

* Dr. *Owen*, on THE SPIRIT, Page 199, speaking of a common Work of the Spirit, says, "The Effects of this Work on the Mind, "which is the first Subject affected with it, proceeds not so far, as "to give it Delight, Complacency and Satisfaction in the lovely "spiritual Nature and Excellencies of the Things revealed unto it. "The true Nature of saving Illumination consists in this, that it "gives the Mind such a direct intuitive Insight and Prospect into "spiritual Things, as that in their own spiritual Nature they suit, "please, and satisfy it; so that it is transformed into them, cast into "the Mould of them, and rests in them; *Rom.* vi. 17. Chap. xii. "2. 1 *Cor.* ii. 13, 14. 2 *Cor.* iii. 18. Chap, iv. 6. This, the Work "we have insisted on, reacheth not unto. For notwithstanding any "Discovery that is made therein of spiritual Things unto the Mind, "it finds not an immediate, direct, spiritual Excellency in them; "but only with Respect unto some Benefit or Advantage, which is "to be attained by Means thereof. It will not give such a spiritual "Insight into the mystery of God's Grace by Jesus Christ, called his "Glory shining in the Face of Christ, 1 *Cor.* iv. 6, as that the Soul, "in its first direct View of it, should, for what it is in itself, admire "it, delight in it, approve it, and find spiritual Solace, with Re-"freshment in it. But such a Light, such a Knowledge, it commu-"nicates, as that a Man may like it well in its Effects, as a Way of "Mercy and Salvation."

higheſt Degree, in hearing how much God and Chriſt makes of them. So that their Joy is really a Joy in themſelves, and not in God.

And becauſe the Joy of Hypocrites is in themſelves, hence it comes to paſs, that in their Rejoicings and Elevations, they are wont to keep their Eye upon themſelves; having received what they call ſpiritual Diſcoveries or Experiences, their Minds are taken up about them, admiring their own Experiences: And what they are principally taken and elevated with, is not the Glory of God, or Beauty of Chriſt, but the Beauty of their Experiences. They keep thinking with themſelves, What a good Experience is this! What a great Diſcovery is this! What wonderful Things have I met with! And ſo they put their Experiences in the Place of Chriſt, and his Beauty and Fullneſs; and inſtead of rejoicing in Chriſt Jeſus, they rejoice in their admirable Experiences; inſtead of feeding and feaſting their Souls in the View of what is without them, *viz.* the innate, ſweet, refreſhing Amiableneſs of the Things exhibited in the Goſpel, their Eyes are off from theſe Things, or at leaſt they view them only as it were Side-ways; but the Object that fixes their Contemplation, is their Experience; and they are feeding their Souls, and feaſting a ſelfiſh Principle with a View of their Diſcoveries: They take more Comfort in their Diſcoveries than in Chriſt diſcovered, which is the true Notion of living upon Experiences and Frames; and not a uſing Experiences as the Signs, on which they rely for Evidence of their good Eſtate, which ſome call living on Experiences: Tho' it be very obſervable, that ſome of them who do ſo, are moſt notorious for living upon Experiences, according to the true Notion of it.

The Affections of Hypocrites are very often after this Manner; they are firſt, much affected with ſome Impreſſion on their Imagination, or ſome Impulſe, which they take to be an immediate Suggeſtion, or Teſtimony from God, of his Love and their Happi-

neſs, and high Privilege in ſome Reſpect, either with or without a Text of Scripture; they are mightily taken with this, as a great Diſcovery; and hence ariſe high Affections. And when their Affections are raiſed, then they view thoſe high Affections; and call them great and wonderful Experiences; and they have a Notion that God is greatly pleaſed with thoſe Affections; and this affects them more; and ſo they are affected with their Affections. And thus their Affections riſe higher and higher, 'till they ſometimes are perfectly ſwallowed up: And Self-conceit, and a fierce Zeal riſes withal; and all is built like a Caſtle in the Air, on no other Foundation but Imagination, Self-love and Pride.

And as the Thoughts of this Sort of Perſons are, ſo is their Talk; for out of the Abundance of their Heart, their Mouth ſpeaketh. As in their high Affections, they keep their Eye upon the Beauty of their Experiences, and Greatneſs of their Attainments; ſo they are great Talkers about themſelves. The true Saint, when under great ſpiritual Affections, from the Fulneſs of his Heart, is ready to be ſpeaking much of God, and his glorious Perfections and Works, and of the Beauty and Amiableneſs of Chriſt, and the glorious Things of the Goſpel; but Hypocrites, in their high Affections, talk more of the Diſcovery, than they do of the Thing diſcovered; they are full of Talk about the great Things they have met with, the wonderful Diſcoveries they have had, how ſure they are of the Love of God to them, how ſafe their Condition is, and how they know they ſhall go to Heaven, *&c.*

A true Saint, when in the Enjoyment of true Diſcoveries of the ſweet Glory of God and Chriſt, has his Mind too much captivated and engaged by what he views without himſelf, to ſtand at that Time to view himſelf, and his own Attainments; it would be a Diverſion and Loſs which he could not bear, to take his Eye off from the raviſhing Object of his Contemplation, to ſurvey his own Experience, and to ſpend Time in thinking

thinking with himself, what an high Attainment this is, and what a good Story I now have to tell others. Nor does the Pleasure and Sweetness of his Mind at that Time, chiefly arise from the Consideration of the Safety of his State, or any Thing he has in View of his own Qualifications, Experiences, or Circumstances; but from the divine and supreme Beauty of what is the Object of his direct View, without himself; which sweetly entertains, and strongly holds his Mind.

As the Love and Joy of Hypocrites, are all from the Source of Self-love; so it is with their other Affections, their Sorrow for Sin, their Humiliation and Submission, their Religious Desires and Zeal: Every Thing is as it were paid for before-hand, in God's highly gratifying their Self-love, and their Lusts, by making so much of them, and exalting them so highly, as Things are in their Imagination. 'Tis easy for Nature, as corrupt as it is, under a Notion of being already some of the highest Favourites of Heaven, and having a God who does so protect them and favour them in their Sins, to love this imaginary God that suits them so well, and to extol him, and submit to him, and to be fierce and zealous for him. The high Affections of many are all built on the Supposition of their being eminent Saints. If that Opinion which they have of themselves were taken away, if they thought they were some of the lower Form of Saints, (tho' they should yet suppose themselves to be real Saints) their high Affections would fall to the Ground. If they only saw a little of the Sinfulness and Vileness of their own Hearts, and their Deformity, in the Midst of their best Duties, and their best Affections; it would knock their Affections on the Head; because their Affections are built upon Self, therefore, Self-knowledge would destroy them. But as to truly gracious Affections, they are built elsewhere: they have their Foundation out of Self, in God and Jesus Christ; and therefore a Discovery of themselves, of their own Deformity, and the Meanness of their

Experiences, tho' it will purify their Affections, yet it will not deſtroy them, but in ſome Reſpects ſweeten and heighten them.

III. Thoſe Affections that are truly holy, are primarily founded on the Lovelineſs of the moral Excellency of divine Things. Or, (to expreſs it otherwiſe) a Love to divine Things for the Beauty and Sweetneſs of their moral Excellency, is the firſt Beginning and Spring of all holy Affections.

Here, for the Sake of the more illiterate Reader, I will explain what I mean by the moral Excellency of divine Things.

And it may be obſerved, that the Word Moral is not to be underſtood here, according to the common and vulgar Acceptation of the Word, when Men ſpeak of *Morality*, and a *moral* Behaviour; meaning an outward Conformity to the Duties of the moral Law, and eſpecially the Duties of the ſecond Table; or intending no more at fartheſt, than ſuch ſeeming Vertues, as proceed from natural Principles, in Oppoſition to thoſe Vertues that are more inward, ſpiritual, and divine; as the Honeſty, Juſtice, Generoſity, Good-nature, and publick Spirit of many of the Heathens are called *moral* Vertues, in Diſtinction from the Holy Faith, Love, Humility, and Heavenly-mindedneſs of true Chriſtians: I ſay the Word Moral is not to be underſtood thus in this Place.

But in order to a right Underſtanding what is meant, it muſt be obſerved, that Divines commonly make a Diſtinction between *moral* Good and Evil, and *natural* Good and Evil. By *moral* Evil, they mean the Evil of Sin, or that Evil which is againſt Duty, and contrary to what is right and ought to be. By *natural* Evil, they don't mean that Evil which is properly oppoſed to Duty; but that which is contrary to meer Nature, without any Reſpect to a Rule of Duty. So the Evil of ſuffering is called natural Evil, ſuch as Pain, and Torment,

Torment, Disgrace, and the like: These Things are contrary to meer Nature, contrary to the Nature of both bad and good, hateful to wicked Men and Devils, as well as good Men and Angels. So likewise natural Defects are called natural Evils, as if a Child be monstrous, or a natural Fool; these are natural Evils, but are not moral Evils, because they have not properly the Nature of the Evil of Sin. On the other Hand, as by moral Evil, Divines mean the Evil of Sin, or that which is contrary to what is right; so by *moral* Good, they mean that which is contrary to Sin, or that Good in Beings who have Will and Choice, whereby as voluntary Agents, they are, and act, as it becomes them to be and to act, or so as is most fit, and suitable, and lovely. By *natural* Good they mean that Good that is entirely of a different Kind from Holiness or Vertue, *viz.* That which perfects or suits Nature, considering Nature abstractly from any holy or unholy Qualifications, and without any Relation to any Rule or Measure of Right and Wrong.

Thus Pleasure is a natural Good; so is Honour; so is Strength; so is speculative Knowledge, human Learning, and Policy. Thus there is a Distinction to be made between the natural Good that Men are possessed of, and their moral Good; and also between the natural and moral Good of the Angels in Heaven: the great Capacity of their Understandings, and their great Strength, and the honourable Circumstances they are in as the great Ministers of God's Kingdom, whence they are called Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers, is the natural Good which they are possessed of; but their perfect and glorious Holiness and Goodness, their pure and flaming Love to God, and to the Saints, and one another, is their moral Good. So Divines make a Distinction between the natural and moral Perfections of God: By the *moral* Perfections of God, they mean those Attributes which God exercises as a moral Agent, or whereby the Heart or Will of God are good, right,

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and infinitely becoming, and lovely; such as his Righteousness, Truth, Faithfulness, and Goodness; or, in one Word, his Holiness. By God's *natural* Attributes or Perfections, they mean those Attributes, wherein, according to our Way of conceiving of God, consists, not the Holiness or moral Goodness of God, but his Greatness; such as his Power, his Knowledge whereby he knows all Things, and his being eternal, from everlasting to everlasting; his Omnipresence, and his awful and terrible Majesty.

The moral Excellency of an intelligent voluntary Being, is more immediately seated in the Heart or Will of moral Agents. That intelligent Being whose Will is truly right and lovely, he is morally good or excellent.

This moral Excellency of an intelligent Being, when it is true and real, and not only external, or meerly seeming and counterfeit, is *Holiness*. Therefore *Holiness* comprehends all the true moral Excellency of intelligent Beings: There is no other *true Vertue*, but *real Holiness*. Holiness comprehends all the true Vertue of a good Man, his Love to God, his gracious Love to Men, his Justice, his Charity, and Bowels of Mercies, his gracious Meekness and Gentleness, and all other true Christian Vertues that he has, belong to his Holiness. So the Holiness of God in the more extensive Sense of the Word, and the Sense in which the Word is commonly, if not universally used concerning God in Scripture, is the same with the moral Excellency of the divine Nature, or his Purity and Beauty, as a moral Agent, comprehending all his moral Perfections, his Righteousness, Faithfulness and Goodness. As in holy Men their Charity, christian Kindness and Mercy, belongs to their Holiness; so the Kindness and Mercy of God belongs to his Holiness. Holiness in Man, is but the Image of God's Holiness: There are not more Vertues belonging to the Image, than are in the Original: Derived Holiness has not more in it, than is in that underived Holiness, which is its Fountain: There is no more than Grace for Grace, or Grace in the Image, answerable to Grace in the Original. As

As there are two Kinds of Attributes in God, according to our Way of conceiving of him, his moral Attributes, which are ſumm'd up in his *Holineſs*, and his natural Attributes, of Strength, Knowledge, *&c.* that conſtitute the *Greatneſs* of God; ſo there is a twofold Image of God in Man, his *moral* or *ſpiritual* Image, which is his Holineſs, that is the Image of God's moral Excellency; (which Image was loſt by the Fall) and God's *natural* Image, conſiſting in Men's Reaſon and Underſtanding, his natural Ability, and Dominion over the Creatures, which is the Image of God's natural Attributes.

From what has been ſaid, it may eaſily be underſtood what I intend, when I ſay, that a Love to divine Things for the Beauty of their *moral Excellency*, is the Beginning and Spring of all holy Affections. It has been already ſhown, under the former Head, that the firſt objective Ground of all holy Affections is the ſupreme Excellency of divine Things, as they are in themſelves, or in their own Nature; I now proceed further, and ſay more particularly, that that Kind of Excellency of the Nature of divine Things, which is the firſt objective Ground of all holy Affections, is their moral Excellency, or their Holineſs. *Holy Perſons*, in the Exerciſe of *holy Affections*, do love divine Things primarily for their *Holineſs*: They love God, in the firſt Place, for the Beauty of his Holineſs or moral Perfection, as being ſupremely amiable in itſelf. Not that the Saints, in the Exerciſe of gracious Affections, do love God only for his Holineſs; all his Attributes are amiable and glorious in their Eyes; they delight in every divine Perfection; the Contemplation of the infinite Greatneſs, Power and Knowledge, and terrible Majeſty of God, is pleaſant to them. But their Love to God for his Holineſs is what is moſt fundamental and eſſential in their Love. Here it is that true Love to God begins: All other holy Love to divine Things flows from hence: This is the moſt eſſential and diſtinguiſhing Thing that belongs to a holy

Love

Love to God, with Regard to the Foundation of it. A Love to God for the Beauty of his moral Attributes, leads to, and neceſſarily cauſes a Delight in God for all his Attributes; for his moral Attributes can't be without his natural Attributes: For infinite Holineſs ſuppoſes infinite Wiſdom, and an infinite Capacity and Greatneſs; and all the Attributes of God do as it were imply one another.

The true Beauty and Lovelineſs of all intelligent Beings does primarily and moſt eſſentially conſiſt in their moral Excellency or Holineſs. Herein conſiſts the Lovelineſs of the Angels, without which, with all their natural Perfections, their Strength, and their Knowledge, they would have no more Lovelineſs than Devils. 'Tis moral Excellency alone, that is in itſelf, and on it's own Account, the Excellency of intelligent Beings: 'Tis this that gives Beauty to, or rather is the Beauty of their natural Perfections and Qualifications. Moral Excellency is the Excellency of natural Excellencies. Natural Qualifications are either excellent or otherwiſe, according as they are join'd with moral Excellency or not. Strength and Knowledge don't render any Being lovely, without Holineſs; but more hateful: Though they render them more lovely, when join'd with Holineſs. Thus the elect Angels are the more glorious for their Strength and Knowledge, becauſe theſe natural Perfections of their's, are ſanctified by their moral Perfection. But though the Devils are very ſtrong, and of great natural Underſtanding, they ben't the more lovely: They are more terrible indeed, but not the more amiable; but on the contrary, the more hateful. The Holineſs of an intelligent Creature, is the Beauty of all his natural Perfections. And ſo it is in God, according to our Way of conceiving of the divine Being: Holineſs is in a peculiar Manner the Beauty of the divine Nature. Hence we often read of the Beauty of Holineſs; *Pſal.* xxix. 2. *Pſal.* xcvi. 9. and cx. 3. This renders all his other Attributes glorious and lovely. 'Tis the Glory of

God's

God's Wisdom, that 'tis a holy Wisdom, and not a wicked Subtilty and Craftiness. This makes his Majesty lovely, and not merely dreadful and horrible, that it is a holy Majesty. 'Tis the Glory of God's Immutability, that it is a holy Immutability, and not an inflexible Obstinacy in Wickedness.

And therefore it must needs be, that a Sight of God's Loveliness must begin here. A true Love to God must begin with a Delight in his Holiness, and not with a Delight in any other Attribute; for no other Attribute is truly lovely without this, and no otherwise than as (according to our Way of conceiving of God) it derives its Loveliness from this; and therefore it is impossible that other Attributes should appear lovely, in their true Loveliness, 'till this is seen; and it is impossible that any Perfection of the divine Nature should be loved with true Love, 'till this is loved. If the true Loveliness of all God's Perfections, arises from the Loveliness of his Holiness, then the true Love of all his Perfections, arises from the Love of his Holiness. They that don't see the Glory of God's Holiness, can't see any Thing of the true Glory of his Mercy and Grace: They see nothing of the Glory of those Attributes, as any Excellency of God's Nature, as it is in itself; tho' they may be affected with them, and love them, as they concern their Interest: For these Attributes are no Part of the Excellency of God's Nature, as that is excellent in itself, any otherwise than as they are included in his Holiness, more largely taken; or as they are a Part of his moral Perfection.

As the Beauty of the divine Nature does primarily consist in God's Holiness, so does the Beauty of all divine Things. Herein consists the Beauty of the Saints, that they are Saints, or holy Ones: 'Tis the moral Image of God in them, which is their Beauty, and that is their Holiness. Herein consists the Beauty and Brightness of the Angels of Heaven, that they are holy Angels, and so not Devils; *Dan.* iv. 13, 17, 23. *Matth.* xxv. 31. *Mark* viii. 38. *Acts* x. 22. *Rev.* xiv. 10. Herein consists

ſiſts the Beauty of the chriſtian Religion, above all other Religions, that it is ſo holy a Religion. Herein conſiſts the Excellency of the Word of God, that it is ſo holy; Pſal. cxix. 140. *Thy Word is very pure, therefore thy Servant loveth it.* Verſe 128. *I eſteem all thy Precepts, concerning all Things, to be right; and I hate every falſe Way.* Verſe 138. *Thy Teſtimonies, that thou haſt commanded, are righteous, and very faithful.* And 172. *My Tongue ſhall ſpeak of thy Word; for all thy Commandments are Righteouſneſs.* And Pſal. xix. 7, 8, 9, 10. *The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the Soul: The Teſtimony of the Lord is ſure, making wiſe the Simple: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart: The Commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightning the Eyes: The Fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever: The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: More to be deſired are they than Gold, yea, than much fine Gold; ſweeter alſo than Honey, and the Honey-Comb.* Herein does primarily conſiſt the Amiableneſs and Beauty of the Lord Jeſus, whereby he is the Chief among ten Thouſands and altogether lovely; even in that he is *the holy One of God*, Acts iii. 14. and *God's holy Child*, Acts iv. 27. and *he that is Holy, and he that is true*, Rev. iii. 7. All the ſpiritual Beauty of his human Nature, conſiſting in his Meekneſs, Lowlineſs, Patience, Heavenlineſs, Love to God, Love to Men, Condeſcenſion to the Mean and Vile, and Compaſſion to the Miſerable, &c. all is ſumm'd up in his Holineſs. And the Beauty of his divine Nature, of which the Beauty of his humane Nature is the Image and Reflection, does alſo primarily conſiſt in his Holineſs. Herein primarily conſiſts the Glory of the Goſpel, that it is a holy Goſpel, and ſo bright an Emanation of the holy Beauty of God and Jeſus Chriſt: Herein conſiſts the ſpiritual Beauty of it's Doctrines, that they are holy Doctrines, or Doctrines according to Godlineſs. And herein does conſiſt the ſpiritual Beauty of the Way of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, that it ſo holy

a Way. And herein chiefly conſiſts the Glory of Heaven, that it is the *holy City*, the *holy Jeruſalem*, *the Habitation of God's Holineſs*, and ſo *of his Glory*; Iſai. lxiii. 15. All the Beauties of the new *Jeruſalem*, as is deſcribed in the two laſt Chapters of Revelation, are but various Repreſentations of this: See Chap. xxi. 2, 10, 11. 18, 21, 27. Chap. xxii. 1, 3.

And therefore it is primarily on Account of this Kind of Excellency, that the Saints do love all theſe Things. Thus they love the Word of God, *becauſe it is very pure.* 'Tis on this Account they love the Saints; and on this Account chiefly it is, that Heaven is lovely to them, and thoſe holy Tabernacles of God amiable in their Eyes: 'Tis on this Account that they love God; and on this Account primarily it is, that they love Chriſt, and that their Hearts delight in the Doctrines of the Goſpel, and ſweetly acquieſce in the Way of Salvation therein revealed.*

Under the Head of the firſt diſtinguiſhing Characteriſtick of gracious Affection, I obſerved that there is given to thoſe that are regenerated, a new ſupernatural Senſe, that is, as it were a certain divine ſpiritual Taſte, which is in its whole Nature diverſe from any former Kinds of Senſation of the Mind, as Taſting is diverſe from any of the other five Senſes, and that ſomething is perceived by a true Saint in the Exerciſe of this new Senſe

* "To the right cloſing with Chriſt's Perſon, this is alſo required, "to taſte the Bitterneſs of Sin, as the greateſt Evil: Elſe a Man will "never cloſe with Chriſt, for his Holineſs in him, and from him, as "the greateſt Good. For we told you, that that is the right Cloſing "with Chriſt for himſelf, when it is for his Holineſs. For aſk a "whoriſh Heart, what Beauty he ſees in the Perſon of Chriſt; he "will, after he has looked over his Kingdom, his Righteouſneſs, "all his Works, ſee a Beauty in them, becauſe they do ſerve his "Turn, to comfort him only. Aſk a Virgin, he will ſee his Happineſs in all; but that which makes the Lord amiable, is his Holineſs; "which is in him to make him holy too. As in Marriage, it is the "perſonal Beauty draws the Heart. And hence I have thought it "Reaſon, that he that loves the Brethren for a little Grace, will love "Chriſt much more." *Shepard*'s Parable, P. I. p. 84.

Senſe of Mind, in ſpiritual and divine Things, as intirely different from any Thing that is perceived in them by natural Men, as the ſweet Taſte of Honey is diverſe from the Ideas Men get of Honey by looking on it or feeling of it; now this that I have been ſpeaking, *viz.* The Beauty of Holineſs is that Thing in ſpiritual and divine Things, which is perceived by this ſpiritual Senſe, that is ſo diverſe from all that natural Men perceive in them: This Kind of Beauty is the Quality that is the immediate Object of this ſpiritual Senſe: This is the Sweetneſs that is the proper Object of this ſpiritual Taſte. The Scripture often repreſents the Beauty and Sweetneſs of Holineſs as the grand Object of a ſpiritual Taſte, and ſpiritual Appetite. This was the ſweet Food of the holy Soul of Jeſus Chriſt, John iv. 32, 34. *I have Meat to eat, that ye know not of:—My Meat is to do the Will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his Work.* I know of no Part of the holy Scriptures, where the Nature and Evidences of true and ſincere Godlineſs, are ſo much of ſet Purpoſe, and ſo fully and largely inſiſted on and delineated, as the cxix Pſalm; the Pſalmiſt declares his Deſign in the firſt Verſes of the Pſalm, and he keeps his Eye on this Deſign all along, and purſues it to the End: But in this Pſalm the Excellency of Holineſs is repreſented as the immediate Object of a ſpiritual Taſte, Reliſh, Appetite and Delight, *God's Law*, that grand Expreſſion and Emanation of the Holineſs of God's Nature, and Preſcription of Holineſs to the Creature, is all along repreſented as the Food and Entertainment, and as the great Object of the Love, the Appetite, the Complacence and Rejoicing of the gracious Nature, which prizes God's Commandments *above Gold, yea, the fineſt Gold*, and to which they are *ſweeter than the Honey, and Honey-comb*; and that upon Account of their Holineſs, as I obſerved before. The ſame Pſalmiſt declares, that this is the Sweetneſs that a ſpiritual Taſte reliſhes in God's Law; Pſal. xix. 8, 9, 10. *The Law of the Lord is perfect:—The Commandment of the*

the Lord is pure: The Fear of the Lord is clean: The Statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the Heart:—The Judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether: More to be desired are they than Gold, yea than much fine Gold; sweeter also than Honey and the Honey-comb.

A holy Love has a holy Object: The Holiness of Love consists especially in this, that it is the Love of that which is holy, as holy, or for it's Holiness; so that 'tis the Holiness of the Object, which is the Quality whereon it fixes and terminates. An holy Nature must needs love that in holy Things chiefly, which is most agreeable to itself; but surely that in divine Things, which above all others is agreeable to holy Nature, is Holiness; because Holiness must be above all other Things agreeable to Holiness; for nothing can be more agreeable to any Nature than itself; holy Nature must be above all Things agreeable to holy Nature: And so the holy Nature of God and Christ, and the Word of God, and other divine Things, must be above all other Things, agreeable to the holy Nature that is in the Saints.

And again, an holy Nature doubtless loves holy Things, especially on the Account of that, for which sinful Nature has Enmity against them: But that for which chiefly sinful Nature is at Enmity against holy Things, is their Holiness; it is for this, that the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, and against the Law of God, and the People of God. Now 'tis just arguing from Contraries; from contrary Causes, to contrary Effects; from opposite Natures, to opposite Tendencies. We know that Holiness is of a directly contrary Nature to Wickedness: As therefore 'tis the Nature of Wickedness chiefly to oppose and hate Holiness; so it must be the Nature of Holiness chiefly to tend to, and delight in Holiness.

The holy Nature in the Saints and Angels in Heaven (where the true Tendency of it best appears) is principally engaged by the Holiness of divine Things. This

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is the divine Beauty which chiefly engages the Attention, Admiration and Praise of the bright and burning *Seraphim*; Isai. vi. 3. *One cried unto another, and said, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole Earth is full of his Glory.* And Rev. iv. 8. *They rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* So the glorified Saints, Chap. xv. 4. *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name, for thou only art Holy!*

And the Scriptures represent the Saints on Earth as adoring God primarily on this Account, and admiring and extolling all God's Attributes, either as deriving Loveliness from his Holiness, or as being a Part of it. Thus when they praise God for his Power, his Holiness is the Beauty that engages them; Psal. xcviii. 1. *O sing unto the Lord a new Song, for he hath done marvellous Things; his right Hand and his* HOLY *Arm hath gotten him the Victory.* So when they praise him for his Justice and terrible Majesty; Psal. xcix. 2, 3. *The Lord is great in* Zion, *and he is high above all People: Let them praise thy great and terrible Name, for it is* HOLY. Verse 5. *Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his Footstool, for he is* HOLY. Verse 8, 9. *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest Vengeance of their Inventions. Exalt ye the Lord our God, and worship at his holy Hill; for the Lord our God is* HOLY. So when they praise God for his Mercy and Faithfulness; Psal. xcvii. 11, 12. *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the Upright in Heart, Rejoice in the Lord ye Righteous, and give Thanks at the Remembrance of his* HOLINESS. 1 Sam ii. 2. *There is none* HOLY *as the Lord; for there is none beside thee; neither is there any Rock like our God.*

By this therefore all may try their Affections, and particularly their Love and Joy. Various Kinds of Creatures shew the Difference of their Natures, very much, in the different Things they relish as their proper Good, one delighting in that which another abhors.

Such

Such a Difference is there between true Saints, and natural Men: Natural Men have no Senſe of the Goodneſs and Excellency of holy Things; at leaſt for their Holineſs; they have no Taſte of that Kind of Good; and ſo may be ſaid not to know that divine Good, or not to ſee it; it is wholly hid from them: But the Saints, by the mighty Power of God, have it diſcovered to them: They have that ſupernatural, moſt noble and divine Senſe given them, by which they perceive it: And it is this that captivates their Hearts, and delights them above all Things; 'tis the moſt amiable and ſweet Thing to the Heart of a true Saint, that is to be found in Heaven or Earth; that which above all others attracts and engages his Soul; and that wherein, above all Things, he places his Happineſs, and which he lots upon for Solace and Entertainment to his Mind, in this World, and full Satisfaction and Bleſſedneſs in another. By this you may examine your Love to God, and to Jeſus Chriſt, and to the Word of God, and your Joy in them, and alſo your Love to the People of God, and your Deſires after Heaven; whether they be from a ſupreme Delight in this Sort of Beauty, without being primarily moved from your imagined Intereſt in them, or Expectations from them. There are many high Affections, great ſeeming Love and rapturous Joys, which have nothing of this holy Reliſh belonging to them.

Particularly, By what has been ſaid you may try your Diſcoveries of the Glory of God's Grace and Love, and your Affections ariſing from them. The Grace of God may appear lovely two Ways; either as *Bonum Utile*, a profitable Good to me, that which greatly ſerves my Intereſt, and ſo ſuits my Self-Love; or as *Bonum formoſum*, a Beautiful Good in itſelf, and Part of the moral and ſpiritual Excellency of the divine Nature. In this latter Reſpect it is that the true Saints have their Hearts affected, and Love captivated by the free Grace of God in the firſt Place.

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From the Things that have been ſaid, it appears, that if Perſons have a great Senſe of the *natural* Perfections of God, and are greatly affected with them, or have any other Sight or Senſe of God, than that which conſiſts in, or implies a Senſe of the Beauty of his *moral* Perfections, it is no certain Sign of Grace: As particularly, Men's having a great Senſe of the *awful Greatneſs, and terrible Majeſty of God*; for this is only God's natural Perfection, and what Men may ſee, and yet be entirely blind to the Beauty of his moral Perfection, and have nothing of that ſpiritual Taſte which reliſhes this divine Sweetneſs.

It has been ſhown already, in what was ſaid upon the firſt diſtinguiſhing Mark of gracious Affections, that that which is ſpiritual, is entirely different in its Nature, from all that it is poſſible any graceleſs Perſon ſhould be the Subject of, while he continues graceleſs. But 'tis poſſible, that thoſe who are wholly without Grace, ſhould have a clear Sight, and very great and affecting Senſe of God's Greatneſs, his mighty Power, and awful Majeſty; for this is what the Devils have, though they have loſt the ſpiritual Knowledge of God, conſiſting in a Senſe of the Amiableneſs of his moral Perfections; they are perfectly deſtitute of any Senſe or Reliſh of that Kind of Beauty, yet they have a very great Knowledge of the natural Glory of God (if I may ſo ſpeak) or his awful Greatneſs and Majeſty; this they behold, and are affected with the Apprehenſions of, and therefore tremble before him. This Glory of God all ſhall behold at the Day of Judgment; God will make all rational Beings to behold it to a great Degree indeed, Angels and Devils, Saints and Sinners: Chriſt will manifeſt his infinite Greatneſs, and awful Majeſty to every One, in a moſt open, clear and convincing Manner, and in a Light that none can reſiſt, when *he ſhall come in the Glory of his Father, and every Eye ſhall ſee him*; when they ſhall cry to the Mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the Face of him that ſits upon the

the Throne, they are repreſented as ſeeing the Glory of God's Majeſty, *Iſai.* ii. 10, 19, 21. God will make all his Enemies to behold this, and to live in a moſt clear and affecting View of it, in Hell, to all Eternity. God hath often declared his immutable Purpoſe to make all his Enemies to know him in this Reſpect, in ſo often annexing theſe Words to the Threatnings he denounces againſt them, *and they ſhall know that I am the Lord*; yea, he hath ſworn that all Men ſhall ſee his Glory in this Reſpect; Numb. xiv. 21. *As truly as I live, all the Earth ſhall be filled with the Glory of the Lord.* And this Kind of Manifeſtation of God is very often ſpoken of in Scripture, as made, or to be made, in the Sight of God's Enemies in this World; *Exod.* ix. 16. and Chap. xiv. 18. and xv. 16. *Pſal.* lxvi. 3. and xlvi. 10. and other Places innumerable. This was a Manifeſtation which God made of himſelf in the Sight of that wicked Congregation at Mount *Sinai*; deeply affecting them with it; ſo that all the People in the Camp trembled. Wicked Men and Devils will ſee, and have a great Senſe of every Thing that appertains to the Glory of God, but only the Beauty of his moral Perfection. They will ſee his infinite Greatneſs and Majeſty, his infinite Power, and will be fully convinced of his Omniſcience, and his Eternity and Immutability; and they will ſee and know every Thing appertaining to his moral Attributes themſelves, but only the Beauty and Amiableneſs of them: They will ſee and know that he is perfectly juſt and righteous and true; and that he is a holy God, of purer Eyes than to behold Evil, who cannot look on Iniquity; and they will ſee the wonderful Manifeſtations of his infinite Goodneſs and free Grace to the Saints; and there is nothing will be hid from their Eyes, but only the *Beauty* of theſe moral Attributes, and that Beauty of the other Attributes, which ariſes from it. And ſo natural Men in this World are capable of having a very affecting Senſe of every Thing elſe that appertains to God, but this only. *Nebuchadnezzar*

had a great and very affecting Senſe of the infinite Greatneſs and awful Majeſty of God, of his ſupreme and abſolute Dominion, and mighty and irreſiſtable Power, and of his Sovereignty, and that he, and all the Inhabitants of the Earth were nothing before him; and alſo had a great Conviction in his Conſcience of his Juſtice, and an affecting Senſe of his great Goodneſs; *Dan.* iv. 1, 2, 3, 34, 35, 37. And the Senſe that *Darius* had of God's Perfections, ſeems to be very much like his; *Dan.* vi. 25, &c. But the Saints and Angels do behold the Glory of God conſiſting in the *Beauty of his Holineſs:* And 'tis this Sight only, that will melt and humble the Hearts of Men, and wean them from the World, and draw them to God, and effectually change them. A Sight of the awful Greatneſs of God, may overpower Men's Strength, and be more than they can endure; but if the moral Beauty of God be hid, the Enmity of the Heart will remain in its full Strength, no Love will be enkindled, all will not be effectual to gain the Will, but that will remain inflexible; whereas the firſt Glimpſe of the moral and ſpiritual Glory of God ſhining into the Heart, produces all theſe Effects, as it were with omnipotent Power, which nothing can withſtand.

The Senſe that natural Men may have of the awful Greatneſs of God, may affect them various Ways; it may not only terrify them, but it may elevate them, and raiſe their Joy and Praiſe, as their Circumſtances may be. This will be the natural Effect of it, under the real or ſuppoſed Receipt of ſome extraordinary Mercy from God, by the Influence of meer Principles of Nature. It has been ſhown already, that the Receipt of Kindneſs may, by the Influence of natural Principles, affect the Heart with Gratitude and Praiſe to God; but if a Perſon, at the ſame Time that he receives remarkable Kindneſs from God, has a Senſe of his infinite Greatneſs, and that he is but nothing in Compariſon of him, ſurely this will naturally raiſe his Gratitude and Praiſe the higher, for Kindneſs to one ſo much

inferior

inferior. A Senſe of God's Greatneſs had this Effect upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, under the Receipt of that extraordinary Favour of his Reſtoration, after he had been driven from Men, and had his dwelling with the Beaſts: A Senſe of God's exceeding Greatneſs raiſes his Gratitude very high; ſo that he does, in the moſt lofty Terms, extol and magnify God, and calls upon all the World to do it with him: And much more, if a natural Man, at the ſame Time that he is greatly affected with God's infinite Greatneſs and Majeſty, entertains a ſtrong Conceit, that this great God has made him his Child and ſpecial Favourite, and promiſed him eternal Glory in his higheſt Love; will this have a Tendency, according to the Courſe of Nature, to raiſe his Joy and Praiſe to a great Height.

Therefore, 'tis beyond Doubt, that too much Weight has been laid, by many Perſons of late, on Diſcoveries of God's Greatneſs, awful Majeſty, and natural Perfection, operating after this Manner, without any real View of the holy, lovely Majeſty of God. And Experience does abundantly witneſs to what Reaſon and Scripture declare as to this Matter; there having been very many Perſons, who have ſeem'd to be overpower'd with the Greatneſs and awful Majeſty of God, and conſequentially elevated in the Manner that has been ſpoken of, who have been very far from having Appearances of a chriſtian Spirit and Temper, in any Manner of Proportion, or Fruits in Practice in any wiſe agreeable; but their Diſcoveries have worked in a Way contrary to the Operation of truly ſpiritual Diſcoveries.

Not that a Senſe of God's Greatneſs and natural Attributes is not exceeding uſeful and neceſſary. For as I obſerved before, this is implied in a Manifeſtation of the Beauty of God's Holineſs. Tho' that be ſomething beyond it, it ſuppoſes it, as the greater ſuppoſes the leſs. And tho' natural Men may have a Senſe of the Natural Perfections of God; yet undoubtedly this is more frequent and common with the Saints, than with

natural Men; and Grace tends to enable Men to see these Things in a better Manner, than natural Men do. And not only enables them to see God's natural Attributes, but that Beauty of those Attributes, which (according to our Way of conceiving of God) is derived from his Holiness.

IV. Gracious Affections do arise from the Mind's being enlightned, rightly and spiritually to understand or apprehend divine Things.

Holy Affections are not Heat without Light; but evermore arise from some Information of the Understanding, some spiritual Instruction that the Mind receives, some Light or actual Knowledge. The Child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine Things than he did before, more of God or Christ and of the glorious Things exhibited in the Gospel; he has some clearer and better View than he had before, when he was not affected: Either he receives some Understanding of divine Things that is new to him; or has his former Knowledge renewed after the View was decayed; 1 John iv. 7. *Every one that loveth, knoweth God.* Phil. i. 9. *I pray that your Love may abound more and more, in Knowledge and in all Judgment.* Rom. x. 2. *They have a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge.* Col. iii. 10. *The new Man, which is renewed in Knowledge.* Psal. xliii. 3, 4. *O send out thy Light and thy Truth; let them lead me, let them bring me into thy holy Hill.* John vi. 45. *It is written in the Prophets, and they shall be all taught of God: Every Man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Knowledge is the Key that first opens the hard Heart, and enlarges the Affections, and so opens the Way for Men into the Kingdom of Heaven; Luke xi. 52. *Ye have taken away the Key of Knowledge.*

Now there are many Affections which don't arise from any Light in the Understanding. And when it is thus,

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it is a ſure Evidence that theſe Affections are not ſpiritual, let them be ever ſo high.* Indeed they have ſome new Apprehenſions which they had not before. Such is the Nature of Man, that is impoſſible his Mind ſhould be affected, unleſs it be by ſomething that he apprehends, or that his Mind conceives of. But in many Perſons thoſe Apprehenſions or Conceptions that they have, wherewith they are affected, have nothing of the Nature of Knowledge or Inſtruction in them. As for Inſtance; when a Perſon is affected with a lively Idea, ſuddenly excited in his Mind, of ſome Shape, or very beautiful pleaſant Form of Countenance, or ſome ſhining Light, or other glorious outward Appearance: Here is ſomething apprehended or conceived by the Mind; but there is nothing of the Nature of Inſtruction in

* "Many that have had mighty ſtrong Affections at firſt Converſion, afterwards become dry, and wither, and conſume, and pine, and die away: And now their Hypocriſy is manifeſt; if not to all the World, by open Prophaneneſs; yet to the diſcerning Eye of living Chriſtians, by a formal, barren, unſavoury, unfruitful Heart and Courſe; becauſe they never had Light to Conviction enough as yet.———'Tis ſtrange to ſee ſome People carried with mighty Affection againſt Sin and Hell, and after Chriſt. And what is the Hell you fear? A dreadful Place. What is Chriſt? They ſcarce know ſo much as Devils do; but that is all. O truſt them not! Many *have*, and theſe *will* fall away to ſome Luſt, or Opinion, or Pride, or World; and the Reaſon is, they never had Light enough, John v. 35, John *was a burning and ſhining Light, and they did joy in him for a Seaſon*; yet glorious as it was, they ſaw not Chriſt by it, eſpecially not with divine Light. Its rare to ſee Chriſtians full both of Light and Affection. And therefore conſider of this; many a Man has been well brought up, and is of a ſweet loving Nature, mild and gentle, and harmleſs, likes and loves the beſt Things, and his Meaning, and Mind, and Heart is good, and has more in Heart than in Shew; and ſo hopes all ſhall go well with him. I ſay there may lie greateſt Hypocriſy under greateſt Affections; eſpecially if they want Light. You ſhall be hardened in your Hypocriſy by them. I never liked violent Affections and Pangs, but only ſuch as were drop'd in by Light; becauſe thoſe come from an external Principle, and laſt not, but theſe do. Men are not affrighted by the Light of the Sun, tho' clearer than the Lightning." *Shepard's* Parable, Part I. Page 146.

in it: Perſons become never the wiſer by ſuch Things, or more knowing about God, or a Mediator between God and Man, or the Way of Salvation by Chriſt, or any Thing contained in any of the Doctrines of the Goſpel. Perſons by theſe external Ideas have no further Acquaintance with God, as to any of the Attributes or Perfections of his Nature; nor have they any further Underſtanding of his Word, or any of his Ways or Works. Truly ſpirtual and gracious Affections are not raiſed after this Manner: Theſe ariſe from the enlightning of the Underſtanding to underſtand the Things that are taught of God and Chriſt, in a new Manner, the coming to a new Underſtanding of the excellent Nature of God, and his wonderful Perfections, ſome new View of Chriſt in his ſpiritual Excellencies and Fulneſs, or Things open'd to him in a new Manner, that appertain to the Way of Salvation by Chriſt, whereby he now ſees how it is, and underſtands thoſe divine and ſpiritual Doctrines which once were Fooliſhneſs to him. Such Enlightnings of the Underſtanding as theſe, are Things entirely different in their Nature, from ſtrong Ideas of Shapes and Colours, and outward Brightneſs and Glory, or Sounds and Voices. That all gracious Affections do ariſe from ſome Inſtruction or Enlightning of the Underſtanding, is therefore a further Proof, that Affections which ariſe from ſuch Impreſſion on the Imagination, are not gracious Affections, beſides the Things obſerved before, which make this evident.

Hence alſo it appears, that Affections ariſing from Texts of Scripture coming to the Mind are vain, when no Inſtruction received in the Underſtanding from thoſe Texts, or any Thing taught in thoſe Texts, is the Ground of the Affection, but the Manner of their coming to the Mind. When Chriſt makes the Scripture a Means of the Heart's burning with gracious Affection, 'tis *by opening the Scriptures to their Underſtandings*; Luke xxiv. 32. *Did not our Heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the Way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?*

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It appears alſo, that the Affection which is occaſioned by the coming of a Text of Scripture muſt be vain, when the Affection is founded on ſomething that is ſuppoſed to be taught by it, which really is not contained in it, nor in any other Scripture; becauſe ſuch ſuppoſed Inſtruction is not real Inſtruction, but a Miſtake, and Miſapprehenſion of the Mind. As for Inſtance, when Perſons ſuppoſe that they are expreſsly taught by ſome Scripture coming to their Minds, that they in particular are beloved of God, or that their Sins are forgiven, that God is their Father, and the like: This is a Miſtake, or Miſapprehenſion; for the Scripture no where reveals the individual Perſons who are beloved, expreſsly; but only by Conſequence, by revealing the Qualifications of Perſons that are beloved of God: And therefore this Matter is not to be learn'd from Scripture any other Way than by Conſequence, and from theſe Qualifications: For Things be not to be *learn'd from* the Scripture any other Way than they are *taught in* the Scripture.

Affections really ariſe from Ignorance, rather than Inſtruction, in theſe Inſtances which have been mention'd; as likewiſe in ſome others that might be mention'd. As ſome when they find themſelves free of Speech in Prayer, they call it God's being with them; and this affects them more; and ſo their Affections are ſet a going and increaſed: When they look not into the Cauſe of this Freedom of Speech; which may ariſe many other Ways beſides God's ſpiritual Preſence. So ſome are much affected with ſome apt Thoughts that come into their Minds about the Scripture, and call it the Spirit of God teaching them. So they aſcribe many of the Workings of their own Minds, which they have a high Opinion of, and are pleaſed and taken with, to the ſpecial immediate Influences of God's Spirit; and ſo are mightily affected with their Privilege. And there are ſome Inſtances of Perſons, in whom it ſeems manifeſt that the firſt Ground of their Affection is ſome bodily Senſation. The animal Spirits, by ſome Cauſe (and probably

probably ſometimes by the Devil) are ſuddenly and unaccountably put into a very agreeable Motion, cauſing Perſons to feel pleaſantly in their Bodies; the animal Spirits are put into ſuch a Motion as is wont to be connected with the Exhileration of the Mind; and the Soul, by the Laws of the Union of Soul and Body, hence feels Pleaſure. The Motion of the animal Spirits don't firſt ariſe from any Affection or Apprehenſion of the Mind whatſoever; but the very firſt Thing that is felt, is an Exhileration of the animal Spirits, and a pleaſant external Senſation, it may be in their Breaſts. Hence through Ignorance, the Perſon being ſurprized, begins to think, ſurely this is the Holy Ghoſt coming into him. And then the Mind begins to be affected and raiſed: There is firſt great Joy; and then many other Affections, in a very tumultuous Manner, putting all Nature, both Body and Mind, into a mighty Ruffle. For though, as I obſerved before, 'tis the Soul only that is *the Seat of the Affection*; yet this hinders not but that bodily Senſations, may in this Manner, be *an Occaſion of Affections* in the Mind.

And if Men's religious Affections do truly ariſe from ſome Inſtruction or Light in the Underſtanding; yet the Affection is not gracious, unleſs the Light which is the Ground of it be ſpiritual. Affections may be excited by that Underſtanding of Things, which they obtain merely by humane Teaching, with the common Improvement of the Faculties of the Mind. Men may be much affected by Knowledge of Things of Religion that they obtain this Way; as ſome Philoſophers have been mightily affected, and almoſt carried beyond themſelves, by the Diſcoveries they have made in Mathematicks and natural Philoſophy. So Men may be much affected from common Illuminations of the Spirit of God, in which God aſſiſts Men's Faculties to a greater Degree of that Kind of Underſtanding of religious Matters, which they have in ſome Degree, by only the ordinary Exerciſe and Improvement of their own Faculties.

ties. Such Illuminations may much affect the Mind; as in many whom we read of in Scripture, *that were once enlightened:* But theſe Affections are not ſpiritual.

There is ſuch a Thing, if the Scriptures are of any Uſe to teach us any Thing, as a ſpiritual, ſupernatural Underſtanding of divine Things, that is peculiar to the Saints, and which thoſe who are not Saints have nothing of. 'Tis certainly a Kind of Underſtanding, apprehending or diſcerning of divine Things, that natural Men have nothing of, which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are Fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* 'Tis certainly a Kind of ſeeing or diſcerning ſpiritual Things, peculiar to the Saints, which is ſpoken of, 1 John iii. 6. *Whoſoever ſinneth hath not ſeen him, neither known him.* 3 John 11. *He that doth Evil hath not ſeen God.* And John vi. 40. *This is the Will of him that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting Life.* Chap. xiv. 19. *The World ſeeth me no more; but ye ſee me.* Chap. xvii. 3. *This is eternal Life, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* Matth. xi. 27. *No Man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any Man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him.* John xii. 45. *He that ſeeth me, ſeeth him that ſent me.* Pſal. ix. 10. *They that know thy Name, will put their Truſt in thee.* Phil. iii. 8. *I count all Things but Loſs, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord,*—Verſe 10. *That I may know him.*—And innumerable other Places there are, all over the Bible, which ſhew the ſame. And that there is ſuch a Thing as an Underſtanding of divine Things, which in its Nature and Kind is wholly different from all Knowledge that natural Men have, is evident from this, that there is an Underſtanding of divine Things, which the Scripture calls ſpiritual Underſtanding; Col. i. 9. *We do not ceaſe to pray for you, and*

to desire that you may be filled with the Knowledge of his Will, in all Wisdom, and spiritual Understanding. It has been already shown, that that which is *spiritual*, in the ordinary Use of the Word in the New Testament, is entirely different in Nature and Kind, from all which natural Men are, or can be the Subjects of.

From hence it may be surely infer'd, wherein spiritual Understanding consists. For if there be in the Saints a Kind of Apprehension or Perception, which is in its Nature, perfectly diverse from all that natural Men have, or that it is possible they should have, 'till they have a new Nature; it must consist in their having a certain Kind of Ideas or Sensations of Mind, which are simply diverse from all that is or can be in the Minds of natural Men. And that is the same Thing as to say, that it consists in the Sensations of a new spiritual Sense, which the Souls of natural Men have not; as is evident by what has been before, once and again observed. But I have already shewn what that new spiritual Sense is, which the Saints have given them in Regeneration, and what is the Object of it. I have shewn that the immediate Object of it is the supreme Beauty and Excellency of the Nature of divine Things, as they are in themselves. And this is agreeable to the Scripture: The Apostle very plainly teaches that the great Thing discovered by spiritual Light, and understood by spiritual Knowledge, is the Glory of divine Things, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. *But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them:* together with Verse 6. *For God who commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ:* And Chap. iii. 18, preceeding; *But we all, with open Face, beholding as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the*

the Lord. And it must needs be so, for as has been before observed, the Scripture often teaches that all true Religion summarily consists in the Love of divine Things. And therefore that Kind of Understanding or Knowledge, which is the proper Foundation of true Religion, must be the Knowledge of the *Loveliness of divine Things.* For doubtless, that Knowledge which is the proper Foundation of *Love*, is the Knowledge of *Loveliness.* What that Beauty or Loveliness of divine Things is, which is the proper and immediate Object of a spiritual Sense of Mind, was shewed under the last Head insisted on, *viz.* That it is the Beauty of their moral Perfection. Therefore it is in the View or Sense of this, that spiritual Understanding does more immediately and primarily consist. And indeed it is plain it can be nothing else; for (as has been shewn) there is nothing pertaining to divine Things besides the Beauty of their moral Excellency, and those Properties and Qualities of divine Things which this Beauty is the Foundation of, but what natural Men and Devils can see and know, and will know fully and clearly to all Eternity.

From what has been said, therefore, we come necessarily to this Conclusion, concerning that wherein spiritual Understanding consists; *viz.* That it consists in *a Sense of the Heart, of the supreme Beauty and Sweetness of the Holiness or moral Perfection of divine Things, together with all that Discerning and Knowledge of Things of Religion, that depends upon, and flows from such a Sense.*

Spiritual Understanding consists primarily in *a Sense of Heart of that spiritual Beauty.* I say, a *Sense of Heart*; for it is not Speculation meerly that is concerned in this Kind of Understanding: Nor can there be a clear Distinction made between the two Faculties of Understanding and Will, as acting distinctly and separately, in this Matter. When the Mind is sensible of the sweet Beauty and Amiableness of a Thing, that implies a Sen-

sibleness

ſibleneſs of Sweetneſs and Delight in the Preſence of the Idea of it: And this Senſibleneſs of the Amiableneſs or Delightfulneſs of Beauty, carries in the very Nature of it, *the Senſe of the Heart*; or an Effect and Impreſſion the Soul is the Subject of, as a Subſtance poſſeſſed of Taſte, Inclination and Will.

There is a Diſtinction to be made between a meer *notional Underſtanding*, wherein the Mind only beholds Things in the Exerciſe of a ſpeculative Faculty; and *the Senſe of the Heart*, wherein the Mind don't only *ſpeculate* and *behold*, but *reliſhes* and *feels*. That Sort of Knowledge, by which a Man has a ſenſible Perception of Amiableneſs and Loathſomeneſs, or of Sweetneſs and Nauſeouſneſs, is not juſt the ſame Sort of Knowledge with that, by which he knows what a Triangle is, and what a Square is. The one is meer ſpeculative Knowledge; the other ſenſible Knowledge, in which more than the meer Intellect is concerned; the Heart is the proper Subject of it, or the Soul as a Being that not only beholds, but has Inclination, and is pleaſed or diſpleaſed. And yet there is the Nature of Inſtruction in it; as he that has perceived the ſweet Taſte of Honey, knows much more about it, than he who has only looked upon and felt of it.

The Apoſtle ſeems to make a Diſtinction between meer ſpeculative Knowledge of the Things of Religion, and ſpiritual Knowledge, in calling that *the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth*; Rom. ii. 20. *Which haſt the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth in the Law.* The latter is often repreſented by reliſhing, ſmelling, or taſting; 2 Cor. ii. 14. *Now Thanks be to God, which always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt Jeſus, and maketh manifeſt the Savour of his Knowledge, in every Place.* Matth. xvi. 23. *Thou ſavoureſt not the Things that be of God, but thoſe Things that be of Men.* 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. *As new born Babes, deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby; if ſo be ye have* taſted *that the Lord is gracious.* Cant. i. 3. *Becauſe of the* Savour

of

of thy good Ointments, thy Name is as Ointment poured forth; *therefore do the Virgins love thee*; compared with 1 John ii. 20. *But ye have an* Unction *from the Holy One, and ye know all Things.*

Spiritual Underſtanding *primarily* conſiſts in this *Senſe, or Taſte of the moral Beauty of divine Things*; ſo that no Knowledge can be called Spiritual, any further than it ariſes from this, and has this in it. But *ſecondarily*, it includes *all that Diſcerning and Knowledge of Things of Religion, which depends upon, and flows from ſuch a Senſe.*

When the true Beauty and Amiableneſs of the Holineſs or true moral Good that is in divine Things, is diſcovered to the Soul, it as it were opens a new World to it's View. This ſhews the Glory of all the Perfections of God, and of every Thing appertaining to the divine Being: For, as was obſerved before, the Beauty of all ariſes from God's moral Perfection. This ſhews the Glory of all God's Works, both of Creation and Providence: For 'tis the ſpecial Glory of them, that God's Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, Faithfulneſs and Goodneſs are ſo manifeſted in them; and without theſe moral Perfections, there would be no Glory in that Power and Skill with which they are wrought. The glorifying of God's moral Perfections, is the ſpecial End of all the Works of God's Hands. By this Senſe of the moral Beauty of divine Things, is underſtood the Sufficiency of Chriſt as a Mediator: For 'tis only by the Diſcovery of the Beauty of the moral Perfection of Chriſt, that the Believer is let into the Knowledge of the Excellency of his Perſon, ſo as to know any Thing more of it than the Devils do: And 'tis only by the Knowledge of the Excellency of Chriſt's Perſon, that any know his Sufficiency as a Mediator; for the latter depends upon, and ariſes from the former. 'Tis by ſeeing the Excellency of Chriſt's Perſon, that the Saints are made ſenſible of the Precioufneſs of his Blood, and it's Sufficiency to attone for Sin: For therein conſiſts the Precioufneſs of Chriſt's

Chriſt's Blood, that 'tis the Blood of ſo excellent and amiable a Perſon. And on this depends the Meritoriouſneſs of his Obedience, and Sufficiency and Prevalence of his Interceſſion. By this Sight of the moral Beauty of divine Things, is ſeen the Beauty of the Way of Salvation by Chriſt: For that conſiſts in the Beauty of the moral Perfections of God, which wonderfully ſhines forth in every Step of this Method of Salvation, from Beginning to End. By this is ſeen the Fitneſs and Suitableneſs of this Way: For this wholly conſiſts in its Tendency to deliver us from Sin and Hell, and to bring us to the Happineſs which conſiſts in the Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment of moral Good, in a Way ſweetly agreeing with God's moral Perfections. And in the Way's being contrived ſo as to attain theſe Ends, conſiſts the excellent Wiſdom of that Way. By this is ſeen the Excellency of the Word of God: Take away all the moral Beauty and Sweetneſs in the Word, and the Bible is left wholly a dead Letter, a dry, lifeleſs, taſteleſs Thing. By this is ſeen the true Foundation of our Duty; the Worthineſs of God to be ſo eſteem'd, honour'd, lov'd, ſubmitted to, and ſerv'd, as he requires of us, and the Amiableneſs of the Duties themſelves that are required of us. And by this is ſeen the true Evil of Sin: For he who ſees the Beauty of Holineſs, muſt neceſſarily ſee the Hatefulneſs of Sin, its contrary. By this Men underſtand the true Glory of Heaven, which conſiſts in the Beauty and Happineſs that is in Holineſs. By this is ſeen the Amiableneſs and Happineſs of both Saints and Angels. He that ſees the Beauty of Holineſs, or true moral Good, ſees the greateſt and moſt important Thing in the World, which is the Fulneſs of all Things, without which all the World is empty, no better than nothing, yea, worſe than nothing. Unleſs this is ſeen, nothing is ſeen, that is worth the Seeing: For there is no other true Excellency or Beauty. Unleſs this be underſtood, nothing is underſtood, that is worthy of the Exerciſe of the noble Faculty of Underſtanding. This is the Beauty of the Godhead,

and

and the Divinity of Divinity, (if I may ſo ſpeak) the Good of the infinite Fountain of Good; without which God himſelf (if that were poſſible to be) would be an infinite Evil, Without which, we ourſelves had better never have been; and without which there had better have been no Being. He therefore in Effect knows nothing, that knows not this: His Knowledge is but the Shadow of Knowledge, or the Form of Knowledge, as the Apoſtle calls it. Well therefore may the Scripture repreſent thoſe who are deſtitute of that ſpiritual Senſe, by which is perceived the Beauty of Holineſs, as totally blind, deaf and ſenſeleſs, yea dead. And well may Regeneration, in which this divine Senſe is given to the Soul by its Creator, be repreſented as opening the blind Eyes, and raiſing the Dead, and bringing a Perſon into a new World. For if what has been ſaid be conſider'd, it will be manifeſt, that when a Perſon has this Senſe and Knowledge given him, he will view nothing as he did before: tho' before he *knew* all Things *after the Fleſh*, *yet henceforth he will know them ſo no more*; and *he is become a new Creature*, *old Things are paſt away*, *behold all Things are become new*; agreeable to 2 *Cor.* v. 16, 17.

And beſides the Things that have been already mentioned, there ariſes from this Senſe of ſpiritual Beauty, all true experimental Knowledge of Religion; which is of itſelf, as it were a new World of Knowledge. He that ſees not the Beauty of Holineſs, knows not what one of the Graces of God's Spirit is; he is deſtitute of any Idea or Conception of all gracious Exerciſes of Soul, and all holy Comforts and Delights, and all Effects of the ſaving Influences of the Spirit of God on the Heart: And ſo is ignorant of the greateſt Works of God, the moſt important and glorious Effects of his Power upon the Creature: And alſo is wholly ignorant of the Saints as Saints; he knows not what they are: And in Effect is ignorant of the whole ſpiritual World.

Things being thus, it plainly appears, that God's implanting that ſpiritual ſupernatural Senſe which has

been

been ſpoken of, makes a great Change in a Man. And were it not for the very imperfect Degree, in which this Senſe is commonly given at firſt, or the ſmall Degree of this glorious Light that firſt dawns upon the Soul; the Change made by this ſpiritual Opening of the Eyes in Converſion, would be much greater, and more remarkable, every Way, than if a Man, who had been born blind, and with only the other four Senſes, ſhould continue ſo a long Time, and then at once ſhould have the Senſe of Seeing imparted to him, in the Midſt of the clear Light of the Sun, diſcovering a World of viſible Objects. For tho' Sight be more noble than any of the other external Senſes; yet this ſpiritual Senſe which has been ſpoken of, is infinitely more noble than that, or any other Principle of Diſcerning that a Man naturally has, and the Object of this Senſe infinitely great and more important.

This Sort of Underſtanding or Knowledge is that Knowledge of divine Things from whence all truly gracious Affections do proceed: By which therefore all Affections are to be tried. Thoſe Affections that ariſe wholly from any other Kind of Knowledge, or do reſult from any other Kind of Apprehenſions of Mind, are vain.*

From

* "Take Heed of contenting yourſelves with every Kind of "Knowledge. Do not worſhip every Image of your own Heads; "eſpecially you that fall ſhort of Truth, or the Knowledge of it. "For when you have ſome, there may be yet that wanting, which "may make you ſincere. There are many Men of great Knowledge, "able to teach themſelves, and others too; and yet their Hearts are "unſound. How comes this to paſs? Is it becauſe they have ſo much "Light? No; but becauſe they want much. And therefore content "not yourſelves with every Knowledge. There is ſome Knowledge "which Men have by the Light of Nature, (which leaves them with-"out Excuſe) from the Book of Creation; ſome by Power of Educa-"tion; ſome by the Light of the Law, whereby Men know their "Sin and Evils; ſome by the Letter of the Goſpel; and ſo Men may "know much, and ſpeak well; and ſo in ſeeing, ſee not; ſome by "the Spirit, and may ſee much, ſo as to prophecy in Chriſt's Name, "and yet bid depart; *Matth.* vii. Now there is *a Light of Glory*, "whereby

From what has been said, may be learn'd wherein the most essential Difference lies between that Light or Understanding which is given by the common Influences of the Spirit of God, on the Hearts of natural Men, and that saving Instruction which is given to the Saints. The latter primarily and most essentially lies in beholding the holy Beauty that is in divine Things; which is the only *true* moral Good, and which the Soul of fallen Man is by Nature totally blind to. The Former consists only in a further Understanding, thro' the Assistance of natural Principles, of those Things which Men may know, in some Measure, by the alone ordinary Exercise of their Faculties. And this Knowledge consists only in the Knowledge of those Things pertaining to Religion, which are *natural.* Thus for Instance, in those Awakenings and Convictions of Conscience, that natural Men are often subject to, the Spirit of God gives no Knowledge of the true *moral* Beauty which is in divine Things; but only assists the Mind to a clearer Idea of the Guilt of Sin, or its Relation to a Punishment, and Connection with the *Evil of Suffering* (without any Sight of its true *moral* Evil, or Odiousness as Sin) and a clearer Idea of the *natural* Perfections of God, wherein consists, not his holy Beauty and Glory, but his awful and terrible Greatness. 'Tis a clear Sight of this, that will fully awaken the Consciences of wicked Men at the Day of Judgment, *without any spiritual Light.*

" whereby the Elect see Things in another Manner: To tell you how, " they cannot: It's the Beginning of Light in Heaven: And the " same Spirit that fills Christ, filling their Minds, that they know, " by this anointing, all Things: Which if ever you have, you must " become Babes and Fools in your own Eyes. God will never write " his Law in your Minds, 'till all the Scribblings of it are blotted " out. Account all your Knowledge Loss for the Gaining of this. " 'Tis sad to see many a Man pleasing himself in his own dreaming " Delusions; yet the poor Creature in seeing, sees not; which is " God's heavy Curse upon Men under greatest Means, and which " lays all waste and desolate." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. p. 147.

Light. And 'tis a leſſer Degree of the ſame, that awakens the Conſciences of natural Men, *without ſpiritual Light*, in this World. The ſame Diſcoveries are in ſome Meaſure given in the Conſcience of an awakened Sinner in this World, which will be given more fully in the Conſciences of Sinners at the Day of Judgment. The ſame Kind of Sight or Apprehenſion of God, in a leſſer Degree, makes awakened Sinners in this World, ſenſible of the dreadful Guilt of Sin, againſt ſo great and terrible a God, and ſenſible of its amazing Puniſhment, and fills them with fearful Apprehenſions of divine Wrath; that will thoroughly convince all wicked Men, of the infinitely dreadful Nature and Guilt of Sin, and aſtoniſh them with Apprehenſions of Wrath, when Chriſt ſhall come in the Glory of his Power and Majeſty, and every Eye ſhall ſee him, and all the Kindreds of the Earth ſhall wail becauſe of him. And in thoſe common Illuminations, which are ſometimes given to natural Men, exciting in them ſome Kind of religious Deſire, Love and Joy, the Mind is only aſſiſted to a clearer Apprehenſion of the *natural Good* that is in divine Things. Thus ſometimes, under common Illuminations, Men are raiſed with the Ideas of the natural Good that is in Heaven; as its outward Glory, its Eaſe, its Honour and Advancement, a being there the Objects of the high Favour of God, and the great Reſpect of Men and Angels, *&c.* So there are many Things exhibited in the Goſpel, concerning God and Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation, that have a *natural* Good in them, which ſuits the natural Principle of Self-Love. Thus in that great Goodneſs of God to Sinners, and the wonderful dying Love of Chriſt, there is a natural Good, which all Men love, as they love themſelves; as well as a ſpiritual and holy Beauty, which is ſeen only by the Regenerate. Therefore there are many Things appertaining to the Word of God's Grace, delivered in the Goſpel, which may cauſe natural Men, when they hear it, *anon with Joy to receive it.* All that Love

which

which natural Men have to God, and Chriſt, and chriſtian Vertues, and good Men, is not from any Sight of the Amiableneſs of the Holineſs, or true *moral* Excellency of theſe Things; but only for the Sake of the *natural* Good there is in them. All natural Men's Hatred of Sin, is as much from Principles of Nature, as Men's Hatred of a Tyger for his Rapaciouſneſs, or their Averſion to a Serpent for his Poiſon and Hurtfulneſs: And all their Love of chriſtian Vertue, is from no higher Principle than their Love of a Man's good Nature, which appears amiable to natural Men; but no otherwiſe than Silver and Gold appears amiable in the Eyes of a Merchant, or than the Blackneſs of the Soil is beautiful in the Eyes of the Farmer.

From what has been ſaid of the Nature of ſpiritual Underſtanding, it appears that ſpiritual Underſtanding does not conſiſt in any new doctrinal Knowledge, or in having ſuggeſted to the Mind any new Propoſition, not before read or heard of: For 'tis plain that this ſuggeſting of new Propoſitions, is a Thing entirely diverſe from giving the Mind a new Taſte or Reliſh of Beauty and Sweetneſs.* 'Tis alſo evident that ſpiritual Knowledge does not conſiſt in any new doctrinal Explanation of any Part of the Scripture; for ſtill, this is but doctrinal Knowledge, or the Knowledge of Propoſitions; the doctrinal explaining of any Part of Scripture, is only giving us to underſtand, what are the Propoſitions contain'd or taught in that Part of Scripture.

Hence

* *Calvin*, in his Inſtitutions, Book I. Chap. ix. § 1. ſays, "It is "not the Office of the Spirit that is promiſed us, to make new and "before unheard of Revelations, or to coin ſome new Kind of Doc"trine, which tends to draw us away from the received Doctrine of "the Goſpel; but to ſeal and confirm to us that very Doctrine which "is by the Goſpel." And in the ſame Place he ſpeaks of ſome, that in thoſe Days maintain'd a contrary Notion, *pretending to be immediately led by the Spirit, as Perſons that were governed by a moſt haughty Self-conceit; and not ſo properly to be looked upon as only labouring under a Miſtake, as driven by a Sort of raving Madneſs.*

Hence it appears, that the *ſpiritual Underſtanding* of the Scripture, don't conſiſt in opening to the Mind the myſtical Meaning of the Scripture, in it's Parables, Types and Allegories; for this is only a doctrinal Explication of the Scripture. He that explains what is meant by the ſtony Ground, and the Seed's ſpringing up ſuddenly, and quickly withering away, only explains what Propoſitions or Doctrines are taught in it. So he that explains what is typified by *Jacob*'s Ladder, and the Angels of God aſcending and deſcending on it, or what was typified by *Joſhua*'s leading *Iſrael* through *Jordan*, only ſhews what Propoſitions are hid in theſe Paſſages. And many Men can explain theſe Types, who have no ſpiritual Knowledge. 'Tis poſſible that a Man might know how to interpret all the Types, Parables, Enigmas, and Allegories in the Bible, and not have one Beam of ſpiritual Light in his Mind; becauſe he may not have the leaſt Degree of that ſpiritual Senſe of the holy Beauty of divine Things which has been ſpoken of, and may ſee nothing of this Kind of Glory in any Thing contained in any of theſe Myſteries, or any other Part of the Scripture. 'Tis plain, by what the Apoſtle ſays, that a Man might underſtand all ſuch Myſteries, and have no ſaving Grace; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. *And though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.* They therefore are very fooliſh, who are exalted in an Opinion of their own ſpiritual Attainments, from Notions that come into their Minds, of the myſtical Meaning of theſe and thoſe Paſſages of Scripture, as tho' it was a ſpiritual Underſtanding of theſe Paſſages, immediately given them by the Spirit of God, and hence have their Affections highly raiſed: And what has been ſaid ſhews the Vanity of ſuch Affections.

From what has been ſaid, it is alſo evident, that it is not ſpiritual Knowledge, for Perſons to be informed of their Duty, by having it immediately ſuggeſted to their Minds, that ſuch and ſuch outward Actions or Deeds

are

are the Will of God. If we ſuppoſe that is truly God's Manner thus to ſignify his Will to his People, by immediate inward Suggeſtions, ſuch Suggeſtions have nothing of the Nature of ſpiritual Light. Such Kind of Knowledge would only be one Kind of doctrinal Knowledge: A Propoſition concerning the Will of God, is as properly a Doctrine of Religion, as a Propoſition concerning the Nature of God, or a Work of God: And an having either of theſe Kinds of Propoſitions, or any other Propoſition, declared to a Man, either by Speech, or inward Suggeſtion, differs vaſtly from an having the holy Beauty of divine Things manifeſted to the Soul, wherein ſpiritual Knowledge does moſt eſſentially conſiſt. Thus there was no ſpiritual Light in *Balaam*; tho' he had the Will of God immediately ſuggeſted to him by the Spirit of God from Time to Time, concerning the Way that he ſhould go, and what he ſhould do and ſay.

'Tis manifeſt therefore, that a Being led and directed in this Manner, is not that holy and ſpiritual *Leading of the Spirit of God*, which is peculiar to the Saints, and a diſtinguiſhing Mark of the Sons of God, ſpoken of Rom. viii. 14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the Sons of God.* Gal. v. 18. *But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the Law.*

And if Perſons have the Will of God concerning their Actions, ſuggeſted to them by ſome Text of Scripture, ſuddenly and extraordinarily brought to their Minds, which Text, as the Words lay in the Bible, before they came to their Minds, related to the Action and Behaviour of ſome other Perſon, but they ſuppoſe, as God ſent the Words to them, he intended ſomething further by them, and meant ſuch a particular Action of their's; I ſay, if Perſons ſhould have the Will of God thus ſuggeſted to them with Texts of Scripture, it alters not the Caſe. The Suggeſtion being accompanied with an apt Text of Scripture, don't make the Suggeſtion to be of the Nature of ſpiritual Inſtruction. As for Inſtance, if

a Perſon in *New-England*, on ſome Occaſion, were at a Loſs whether it was his Duty to go into ſome popiſh or heatheniſh Land, where he was like to be expoſed to many Difficulties and Dangers, and ſhould pray to God that he would ſhew him the Way of his Duty; and after earneſt Prayer, ſhould have thoſe Words which God ſpake to *Jacob*, *Gen.* xlvi. ſuddenly and extraordinarily brought to his Mind, as if they were ſpoken to him; *Fear not to go down into* Egypt; *and I will go with thee*; *and I will alſo ſurely bring thee up again.* In which Words, though as they lay in the Bible before they came to his Mind, they related only to *Jacob*, and his Behaviour; yet he ſuppoſes that God has a further Meaning, as they were brought and applied to him; that thus they are to be underſtood in a new Senſe, that by *Egypt* is to be underſtood this particular Country he has in his Mind, and that the Action intended is his going thither, and that the Meaning of the Promiſe is that God would bring him back into *New-England* again. There is nothing of the Nature of a ſpiritual or gracious Leading of the Spirit in this; for there is nothing of the Nature of ſpiritual Underſtanding in it. Thus to underſtand Texts of Scripture, is not to have a ſpiritual Underſtanding of them. Spiritually to underſtand the Scripture, is rightly to underſtand what *is in* the Scripture, and what *was in* it before it was underſtood: 'Tis to underſtand rightly, what *uſed to be contained in* the Meaning of it; and not the making a new Meaning. When the Mind is enlightened ſpiritually and rightly to underſtand the Scripture, it is enabled to ſee That in the Scripture, which before was not ſeen, *by Reaſon of Blindneſs.* But if it was by Reaſon of Blindneſs; that is an Evidence that the ſame Meaning was in it before; otherwiſe it would have been no Blindneſs not to ſee it: 'Tis no Blindneſs not to ſee a Meaning which is not there. Spiritually enlightening the Eyes to underſtand the Scripture, is *to open the Eyes*, Pſal. cxix. 18. *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy*

thy Law; which argues that the Reaſon why the ſame was not ſeen in the Scripture before, was that the Eyes were *ſhut*; which would not be the Caſe, if the Meaning that is now underſtood was not there before, but is now newly added to the Scripture, by the Manner of the Scripture's coming to my Mind. This making a new Meaning to the Scripture, is the ſame Thing as making a new Scripture: It is properly adding to the Word; which is threatened with ſo dreadful a Curſe. Spiritually to underſtand the Scripture, is to have the Eyes of the Mind opened, to behold the wonderful ſpiritual Excellency of the glorious Things contained in the true Meaning of it, and that always were contained in it, ever ſince it was written; to behold the amiable and bright Manifeſtations of the divine Perfections, and of the Excellency and Sufficiency of Chriſt, and the Excellency and Suitableneſs of the Way of Salvation by Chriſt, and the ſpiritual Glory of the Precepts and Promiſes of the Scripture, *&c.* Which Things are, and always were in the Bible, and would have been ſeen before, if it had not been for Blindneſs, without having any new Senſe added by the Words being ſent by God to a particular Perſon, and ſpoken anew to him, with a new Meaning.

And as to a gracious *Leading of the Spirit*, it conſiſts in two Things; partly in *inſtructing* a Perſon in his Duty by the Spirit, and partly in powerfully *inducing* him to comply with that Inſtruction. But ſo far as the gracious Leading of the Spirit lies in Inſtruction, it conſiſts in a Perſon's being guided by a ſpiritual and diſtinguiſhing Taſte of that which has in it true moral Beauty. I have ſhewn that ſpiritual Knowledge primarily conſiſts in a Taſte or Reliſh of the Amiableneſs and Beauty of that which is truly good and holy: This holy Reliſh is a Thing that diſcerns and diſtinguiſhes between Good and Evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the Trouble of a Train of Reaſoning. As he who has a true Reliſh of external Beauty, knows what is beautiful by looking

looking upon it: He ſtands in no need of a Train of Reaſoning about the Proportion of the Features, in order to determine whether that which he ſees be a beautiful Countenance or no: He needs nothing, but only the Glance of his Eye. He who has a rectified muſical Ear, knows whether the Sound he hears be true Harmony: He don't need firſt to be at the Trouble of the Reaſonings of a Mathematician, about the Proportion of the Notes. He that has a rectified Palate, knows what is good Food, as ſoon as he taſtes it, without the Reaſoning of a Phyſician about it. There is a holy Beauty and Sweetneſs in Words and Actions, as well as a natural Beauty in Countenances and Sounds, and Sweetneſs in Food; Job xii. 11. *Doth not the Ear try Words, and the Mouth taſte his Meat.* When a holy and amiable Action is ſuggeſted to the Thoughts of a holy Soul; that Soul, if in the lively Exerciſe of its ſpiritual Taſte, at once ſees a Beauty in it, and ſo inclines to it, and cloſes with it. On the Contrary, if an unworthy unholy Action be ſuggeſted to it, its ſanctified Eye ſees no Beauty in it, and is not pleaſed with it; its ſanctified Taſte reliſhes no Sweetneſs in it, but on the contrary, it is nauſeous to it. Yea, its holy Taſte and Appetite leads it to think of That which is truly lovely, and naturally ſuggeſts it; as a healthy Taſte and Appetite naturally ſuggeſts the Idea of its proper Object. Thus a holy Perſon is led by the Spirit, as he is inſtructed and led by his holy Taſte, and Diſpoſition of Heart; whereby, in the lively Exerciſe of Grace, he eaſily diſtinguiſhes Good and Evil, and knows at once, what is a ſuitable amiable Behaviour towards God, and towards Man, in this Caſe and the other; and judges what is right, as it were ſpontaneouſly, and of himſelf, without a particular Deduction, by any other Arguments than the Beauty that is ſeen, and Goodneſs that is taſted. Thus Chriſt blames the *Phariſees*, that they *did not, even of their own ſelves, judge what was right*, without needing Miracles to prove it, *Luke* xii. 57. The Apoſtle

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seems plainly to have Respect to this Way of judging of spiritual Beauty, in Rom. xii. 2. *Be ye transformed by the Renewing of your Mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable Will of God.*

There is such a Thing as *good Taste* of *natural* Beauty, (which learned Men often speak of) that is exercised about *temporal* Things, in judging of them; as about the Justness of a Speech, the Goodness of Style, the Beauty of a Poem, the Gracefulness of Deportment, &c. A late great Philosopher of our Nation, writes thus upon it; * "To have *a Taste*, is to give Things their "real Value, to be touch'd with the Good, to be shock'd "with the Ill; not to be dazzled with false Lustres, "but in Spight of all Colours, and every Thing that "might deceive or amuse, to judge soundly. *Taste* and "*Judgment* then, should be the same Thing; and yet "'tis easy to discern a Difference. The *Judgment* forms "its Opinions from Reflection: The Reason on this "Occasion fetches a Kind of Circuit, to arrive at its "End; it supposes Principles, it draws Consequences, "and it judges; but not without a thorough Knowledge "of the Case; so that after it has pronounced, it is ready "to render a Reason of its Decrees. *Good Taste* observes "none of these Formalities; e'er it has Time to consult, "it has taken its Side; as soon as ever the Object is pre-"sented it, the Impression is made, the Sentiment for-"med, ask no more of it. As the Ear is wounded with "a harsh Sound, as the Smell is sooth'd with an agree-"able Odour, before ever the Reason have meddled "with those Objects to judge of them, so the *Taste* "opens itself at once, and prevents all Reflection. They "may come afterwards to confirm it, and discover the "secret Reasons of its Conduct; but it was not in its "Power to wait for them. Frequently it happens not "to know them at all, and what Pains soever it uses, "cannot discover what it was determined it to think as "it did. This Conduct is very different from That the "*Judgment*

* *Chamber*'s Dictionary, under the Word TASTE.

" *Judgment* obſerves in its Deciſions: Unleſs we chuſe " to ſay, that *good Taſte* is as it were a firſt Motion, or " a Kind of Inſtinct of right Reaſon, which hurries on " with Rapidity, and conducts more ſecurely, than all " the Reaſonings ſhe could make: 'Tis a firſt Glance of " the Eye, which diſcovers to us the Nature and Rela- " tions of Things in a Moment."

Now as there is ſuch a Kind of *Taſte* of the Mind as this, which Philoſophers ſpeak of, whereby Perſons are guided in their Judgment of the natural Beauty, Gracefulneſs, Propriety, Nobleneſs and Sublimity of Speeches and Actions, whereby they judge as it were by the Glance of the Eye, or by inward Senſation, and the firſt Impreſſion of the Object; ſo there is likewiſe ſuch a Thing as a *divine Taſte*, given and maintained by the Spirit of God, in the Hearts of the Saints, whereby they are in like Manner led and guided in diſcerning and diſtinguiſhing, the true ſpiritual and holy Beauty of Actions; and that more eaſily, readily and accurately, as they have more or leſs of the Spirit of God dwelling in them. And thus *the Sons of God are led by the Spirit of God, in their Behaviour in the World.*

A holy Diſpoſition and ſpiritual Taſte, where Grace is ſtrong and lively, will enable a Soul to determine what Actions are right and becoming Chriſtians, not only more ſpeedily, but far more exactly, than the greateſt Abilities without it. This may be illuſtrated by the Manner in which ſome Habits of Mind, and Diſpoſitions of Heart, of a Nature inferiour to true Grace, will teach and guide a Man in his Actions. As for Inſtance, if a Man be a very good natur'd Man, his good Nature will teach him better how to act benevolently amongſt Mankind, and will direct him, on every Occaſion, to thoſe Speeches and Actions, which are agreeable to Rules of Goodneſs, than the ſtrongeſt Reaſon will a Man of a moroſe Temper. So if a Man's Heart be under the Influence of an entire Friendſhip, and moſt endeared Affection to another; though he be a Man of

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an indifferent Capacity, yet this Habit of his Mind will direct him, far more readily and exactly, to a Speech and Deportment, or Manner of Behaviour, which shall in all Respects be sweet and kind, and agreeable to a benevolent Disposition of Heart, than the greatest Capacity without it. He has as it were a Spirit within him, that guides him: The Habit of his Mind is attended with a Taste, by which he immediately relishes that Air and Mein which is benevolent, and dis-relishes the contrary, and causes him to distinguish between one and the other *in a Moment*, more precisely, than the most accurate Reasonings can find out *in many Hours*. As the Nature and inward Tendency of a Stone, or other heavy Body, that is let fall from a Loft, shews the Way to the Centre of the Earth, more exactly in an Instant, than the ablest Mathematician, without it, could determine, by his most accurate Observations, in a whole Day. Thus it is that a spiritual Disposition and Taste teaches and guides a Man in his Behaviour in the World. So an eminently humble, or meek, or charitable Disposition, will direct a Person of mean Capacity to such a Behaviour, as is agreeable to christian Rules of Humility, Meekness and Charity, far more readily and precisely, than the most diligent Study, and elaborate Reasonings, of a Man of the strongest Faculties, who has not a christian Spirit within him. So also will a Spirit of Love to God, and holy Fear and Reverence towards God, and filial Confidence in God, and an heavenly Disposition, teach and guide a Man in his Behaviour.

'Tis an exceeding difficult Thing for a wicked Man, destitute of christian Principles in his Heart, to guide him, to know how to demean himself like a Christian, with the Life, and Beauty, and heavenly Sweetness of a truly holy, humble, Christ-like Behaviour. He knows not how to put on these Garments; neither do they fit him; Eccl. x. 2, 3. *A wise Man's Heart is at his Right Hand; but a Fool's Heart is at his Left. Yea also,*

alſo, when he that is a Fool, walketh by the Way, his Wiſdom faileth him; and he ſaith to every one that he is a Fool: With Verſe 15. *The Labour of the Fooliſh, wearieth every one of them; becauſe he knoweth not how to go to the City,* Prov. x. 32. *The Lips of the Righteous know what is acceptable.* Chap. xv. 2. *The Tongue of the Wiſe uſeth Knowledge aright; but the Mouth of Fools poureth out Fooliſhneſs.* And Chap. xvi. 23. *The Heart of the Righteous teacheth his Mouth, and addeth Learning to his Lips.*

The Saints in thus judging of Actions by a ſpiritual Taſte, have not a particular Recourſe to the expreſs Rules of God's Word, with Reſpect to every Word and Action that is before them, the Good or Evil of which they thus judge of: But yet their Taſte itſelf in general, is ſubject to the Rule of God's Word, and muſt be tried by that, and a right Reaſoning upon it. As a Man of a rectified Palate judges of particular Morſels by his Taſte: But yet his Palate itſelf muſt be judged of, whether it be right or no, by certain Rules and Reaſons. But a ſpiritual Taſte of Soul, mightily helps the Soul, in its Reaſonings on the Word of God, and in judging of the true Meaning of its Rules; as it removes the Prejudices of a depraved Appetite, and naturally leads the Thoughts in the right Channel, caſts a Light on the Word of God, and cauſes the true Meaning, moſt naturally to come to Mind, through the Harmony there is between the Diſpoſition and Reliſh of a ſanctified Soul, and the true Meaning of the Rules of God's Word. Yea, this Harmony tends to bring the Texts themſelves to Mind, on proper Occaſions; as the particular State of the Stomach and Palate, tends to bring ſuch particular Meats and Drinks to Mind, as are agreeable to that State. Thus *the Children of God are led by the Spirit of God,* in judging of Actions themſelves, and in their Meditations upon, and judging of, and applying the Rules of God's holy Word: And ſo God *teaches them his Statutes, and cauſes them to underſtand the Way of his Precepts*; which the Pſalmiſt ſo often prays for.

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But this Leading of the Spirit is a Thing exceeding diverſe from that which ſome call ſo; which conſiſts not in teaching them God's Statutes and Precepts, that he has already given; but in giving them new Precepts, by immediate inward Speech or Suggeſtion; and has in it no taſting the true Excellency of Things, or judging or diſcerning the Nature of Things at all. They don't determine what is the Will of God by any Taſte or Reliſh, or any Manner of Judgment of the Nature of Things, but by an immediate Dictate concerning the Thing to be done: There is no ſuch Thing as any Judgment or Wiſdom in the Caſe. Whereas in that Leading of the Spirit which is peculiar to God's Children, is imparted that true Wiſdom, and holy Diſcretion, ſo often ſpoken of in the Word of God; which is high above the other Way, as the Stars are higher than a Glow-Worm; and that which *Balaam* and *Saul* (who ſometimes were led by the Spirit in that other Way) never had, and no natural Man can have, without a Change of Nature.

What has been ſaid of the Nature of ſpiritual Underſtanding, as conſiſting moſt eſſentially in a divine ſupernatural Senſe and Reliſh of the Heart, not only ſhews that there is nothing of it in this falſly ſuppoſed *Leading of the Spirit*, which has been now ſpoken of; but alſo ſhews the Difference between ſpiritual Underſtanding, and all Kinds and Forms of Enthuſiaſm, all imaginary Sights of God and Chriſt, and Heaven, all ſuppoſed Witneſſing of the Spirit, and Teſtimonies of the Love of God by immediate inward Suggeſtion; and all Impreſſions of future Events, and immediate Revelations of any ſecret Facts whatſoever; all enthuſiaſtical Impreſſions and Applications of Words of Scripture, as tho' they were Words now immediately ſpoken by God to a particular Perſon, in a new Meaning, and carrying ſomething more in them, than the Words contain as they lie in the Bible; and all Interpretations of the myſtical Meaning of the Scripture, by ſuppoſed immediate Revelation.

Revelation. None of these Things consist in a divine Sense and Relish of the *Heart*, of the holy Beauty and Excellency of divine Things; nor have they any Thing to do with such a Sense; but all consist in Impressions in the *Head*; all are to be refer'd to the Head of *Impressions on the Imagination*, and consist in the exciting external Ideas in the Mind, either in Ideas of outward Shapes and Colours, or Words spoken, or Letters written, or Ideas of Things external and sensible, belonging to Actions done, or Events accomplished, or to be accomplished. An enthusiastical supposed Manifestation of the Love of God, is made by the exciting an Idea of a smiling Countenance, or some other pleasant outward Appearance, or by the Idea of pleasant Words spoken, or written, excited in the Imagination, or some pleasant bodily Sensation. So when Persons have an imaginary Revelation of some secret Fact, 'tis by exciting external Ideas; either of some Words, implying a Declaration of that Fact, or some visible or sensible Circumstances, of such a Fact. So the supposed Leading of the Spirit, to do the Will of God, in outward Behaviour, is either by exciting the Idea of Words (which are outward Things) in their Minds, either the Words of Scripture, or other Words, which they look upon as an immediate Command of God; or else by exciting and impressing strongly the Ideas of the outward Actions themselves. So when an Interpretation of a Scripture Type or Allegory, is immediately, in an extraordinary Way, strongly suggested, it is by suggesting Words, as tho' one secretly whisper'd, and told the Meaning; or by exciting other Ideas in the Imagination.

Such Sort of Experiences and Discoveries as these commonly raise the Affections of such as are deluded by them, to a great Height, and make a mighty Uproar in both Soul and Body. And a very great Part of the false Religion that has been in the World, from one Age to another, consists in such Discoveries as these, and in the Affections that flow from them. In such

Things

Things conſiſted the Experiences of the ancient *Pythagoreans* among the Heathen, and many others among them, who had ſtrange Extaſies and Raptures, and pretended to a divine *Afflatus*, and immediate Revelations from Heaven. In ſuch Things as theſe ſeem to have conſiſted the Experiences of the *Eſſenes*, an antient Sect among the *Jews*, at, and after the Times of the Apoſtles. In ſuch Things as theſe conſiſted the Experiences of many of the ancient *Gnoſticks*, and the *Montaniſts*, and many other Sects of ancient Hereticks, in the primitive Ages of the chriſtian Church. And in ſuch Things as theſe conſiſted the pretended immediate Converſe, with God and Chriſt, and Saints and Angels of Heaven, of the *Monks*, *Anchorites*, and *Recluſes*, that formerly abounded in the Church of *Rome*. In ſuch Things conſiſted the pretended high Experiences, and great Spirituality of many Sects of Enthuſiaſts, that ſwarm'd in the World after the Reformation; ſuch as the *Anabaptiſts*, *Antinomians*, and *Familiſts*, the Followers of *N. Stork*, *Th. Muncer*, *Jo. Becold*, *Henry Pfeifer*, *David George*, *Caſper Swenckfield*, *Henry Nicolas*, *Johannes Agricola Eiſlebius*; and the many wild Enthuſiaſts that were in *England* in the Days of *Oliver Cromwell*; and the Followers of Mrs. *Hutchinſon*, in *New-England*; as appears by the particular and large Accounts given of all theſe Sects, by that eminent holy Man, Mr. *Samuel Rutherford*, in his *Diſplay of the ſpiritual Antichriſt*. And in ſuch Things as theſe conſiſted the Experiences of the late *French Prophets*, and their Followers. And in theſe Things ſeem to lie the Religion of the many Kinds of Enthuſiaſts of the preſent Day. 'Tis by ſuch Sort of Religion as this chiefly, that *Satan* transforms himſelf into an Angel of Light: And it is that which he has ever moſt ſucceſſively made uſe of to confound hopeful and happy Revivals of Religion, from the Beginning of the Chriſtian Church to this Day. When the Spirit of God is poured out, to begin a glorious Work, then the old Serpent, as faſt as poſſible,

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and by all Means introduces this Baſtard Religion, and mingles it with the true; which has from Time to Time ſoon brought all Things into Confuſion. The pernicious Conſequence of it is not eaſily imagined or conceived of, 'till we ſee and are amazed with the awful Effects of it, and the diſmal Deſolation it has made. If the Revival of true Religion be very great in its Beginning, yet if this Baſtard comes in, there is Danger of its doing as *Gideon*'s Baſtard *Abimelech* did, who never left 'till he had ſlain all his Threeſcore and Ten true born Sons, excepting one, that was forced to flee. Great and ſtrict therefore ſhould be the Watch and Guard that Miniſters maintain againſt ſuch Things, eſpecially at a Time of great Awakening: For Men, eſpecially the common People, are eaſily bewitched with ſuch Things; they having ſuch a glaring and gliſtering Shew of high Religion; and the Devil hiding his own Shape, and appearing as an Angel of Light, that Men may not be afraid of him, but may adore him.

The Imagination or Phantaſy ſeems to be that wherein are form'd all thoſe Deluſions of *Satan*, which thoſe are carried away with, who are under the Influence of falſe Religion, and counterfeit Graces and Affections. Here is the Devil's grand Lurking-Place, the very Neſt of foul and deluſive Spirits. 'Tis very much to be doubted whether the Devil can come at the Soul of Man, at all to affect it, or to excite any Thought or Motion, or produce any Effect whatſoever in it, any other Way, than by the Phantaſy; which is that Power of the Soul, by which it receives, and is the Subject of the Species, or Ideas of outward and ſenſible Things. As to the Laws and Means which the Creator has eſtabliſhed, for the Intercourſe and Communication of unbodied Spirits, we know nothing about them; we don't know by what Medium they manifeſt their Thoughts to each other, or excite Thoughts in each other. But as to Spirits that are united to Bodies, thoſe Bodies God has united them to, are their Medium of Communication: They have

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no other Medium of acting on other Creatures, or being acted on by them, than the Body. Therefore it is not to be ſuppoſed, that *Satan* can excite any Thought, or produce any Effect in the Soul of Man, any otherwiſe than by ſome Motion of the animal Spirits, or by cauſing ſome Motion or Alteration in ſomething which appertains to the Body. There is this Reaſon to think that the Devil can't produce Thoughts in the Soul immediately, or any other Way, than by the Medium of the Body, *viz.* That he can't immediately ſee or know the Thoughts of the Soul: It is abundantly declared in the Scripture to be peculiar to the omniſcient God to do that. But it is not likely that the Devil can *immediately produce* an Effect which is out of the Reach of his *immediate View.* It ſeems unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that his immediate Agency, ſhould be out of his own Sight, or that it ſhould be impoſſible for him to ſee what he himſelf immediately does. Is it not unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that any Spirit or intelligent Agent, ſhould by the Act of his Will, produce Effects, according to his Underſtanding, or agreeable to his own Thoughts, and that immediately; and yet the Effects produced, be beyond the Reach of his Underſtanding, or where he can have no immediate Perception or Diſcerning at all. But if this be ſo, that the Devil can't produce Thoughts in the Soul immediately, or any other Way than by the animal Spirits, or by the Body; then it follows, that he never brings to paſs any Thing in the Soul, but by the Imagination or Phantaſy, or by exciting external Ideas. For we know that Alterations in the Body, do immediately excite no other Sort of Ideas in the Mind, but external Ideas, or Ideas of the outward Senſes, or Ideas which are of the ſame outward Nature. As to Reflection, Abſtraction, Reaſoning, *&c.* and thoſe Thoughts and inward Motions which are the Fruits of theſe Acts of the Mind, they are not the next Effects of Impreſſions on the Body. So that it muſt be only by the Imagination, that *Satan* has Acceſs to the Soul, to tempt

and delude it, or ſuggeſt any Thing to it.* And this ſeems to be the Reaſon why Perſons that are under the Diſeaſe of Melancholy, are commonly ſo viſibly and remarkably ſubject to the Suggeſtions and Temptations of *Satan:* That being a Diſeaſe which peculiarly affects the animal Spirits, and is attended with Weakneſs of that Part of the Body which is the Fountain of the animal Spirits, even the Brain, which is, as it were, the Seat of the Phantaſy. 'Tis by Impreſſions made on the Brain, that any Ideas are excited in the Mind, by the Motion of the animal Spirits, or any Changes made it

* "The Imagination is that Room of the Soul, wherein the Devil "doth often appear. Indeed (to ſpeak exactly) the Devil hath no "efficient Power over the rational Part of a Man: He cannot change "the Will; he cannot alter the Heart of a Man. So that the utmoſt "he can do, in tempting a Man to Sin, is by Swaſion and Suggeſtion "only. But then how doth the Devil do this? Even by working "upon the Imagination. He obſerveth the temper, and bodily Con-"ſtitution of a Man; and thereupon ſuggeſts to his Fancy, and "injects his fiery Darts thereinto, by which the Mind and Will come "to be wrought upon. The Devil then, tho' he hath no imperious "Efficacy over thy Will, yet becauſe he can thus ſtir and move thy "Imagination, and thou being naturally deſtitute of Grace, can'ſt "not withſtand theſe Suggeſtions; hence it is that any Sin in thy "Imagination, tho' but in the outward Works of the Soul, yet doth "quickly lay hold on all. And indeed, by this Means do ariſe thoſe "horrible Deluſions, that are in many erroneous Ways of Religion: "All is becauſe their Imaginations are corrupted. Yea, how often "are theſe diabolical Deluſions of the Imagination, taken for the "gracious Operations of God's Spirit?—It is from hence that many "have pretended to Enthuſiaſms;.—They leave the Scriptures, and "wholly attend to what they perceive and feel within them." *Burgeſs* on original Sin, Pa. 369.

The great *Turretine*, ſpeaking on that Queſtion, *What is the Power of Angels*, ſays, "As to Bodies, there is no Doubt, but that "they can do a great deal upon all Sorts of elementary and ſublunary "Bodies, to move them locally, and variouſly to agitate them. 'Tis "alſo certain, that they can act upon the external and internal "Senſes, to excite them, or to bind them. But as to the rational "Soul itſelf, they can do nothing immediately upon that; for to "God alone, who knows and ſearches the Hearts, and who has them "in his Hands, does it alſo appertain to bow and move them whi-"therſoever he will. But Angels can act upon the rational Soul, only "mediately, by Imaginations." *Theolog. Elench. Lock.* VII. *Queſt.* 7.

in the Body. The Brain being thus weaken'd and diſeaſed, 'tis leſs under the command of the higher Faculties of the Soul, and yields the more eaſily to extrinſick Impreſſions, and is over-power'd by the diſorder'd Motions of the animal Spirits; and ſo the Devil has greater Advantage to affect the Mind, by working on the Imagination. And thus *Satan*, when he caſts in thoſe horrid Suggeſtions into the Minds of many melancholly Perſons, in which they have no Hand themſelves, he does it by exciting imaginary Ideas, either of ſome dreadful Words or Sentences, or other horrid outward Ideas. And when he tempts other Perſons who are not melancholly, he does it by preſenting to the Imagination, in a lively and alluring Manner, the Objects of their Luſts, or by exciting Ideas of Words, and ſo by them exciting Thoughts; or by promoting an Imagination of outward Actions, Events, Circumſtances, *&c.* Innumerable are the Ways by which the Mind might be led on to all Kind of evil Thoughts, by exciting external Ideas in the Imagination.

If Perſons keep no Guard at theſe Avenues of *Satan*, by which he has Acceſs to the Soul, to tempt and delude it, they will be likely to have enough of him. And eſpecially, if inſtead of guarding againſt him, they lay themſelves open to him, and ſeek and invite him; becauſe he appears as an Angel of Light, and counterfeits the Illuminations and Graces of the Spirit of God, by inward Whiſpers, and immediate Suggeſtions of Facts and Events, pleaſant Voices, beautiful Images, and other Impreſſions on the Imagination. There are many who are deluded by ſuch Things, and are lifted up with them, and ſeek after them, that have a continued Courſe of them, and can have them almoſt when they will; and eſpecially when their Pride and Vain-glory has moſt Occaſion for them, to make a Shew of them before Company. 'Tis with them, ſomething as 'tis with thoſe who are Profeſſors of the Art of telling where loſt Things are to be found, by Impreſſions made

on their Imaginations; they laying themſelves open to the Devil, he is always at Hand to give them the deſired Impreſſion.

Before I finiſh what I would ſay on this Head of Imaginations, counterfeiting ſpiritual Light, and Affections ariſing from them, I would renewedly (to prevent Miſunderſtanding of what has been ſaid) deſire it may be obſerved, that I am far from determining, that no Affections are ſpiritual, which are attended with imaginary Ideas. Such is the Nature of Man, that he can ſcarcely think of any Thing intenſely, without ſome Kind of outward Ideas. They ariſe and interpoſe themſelves unavoidably, in the Courſe of a Man's Thoughts; tho' oftentimes they are very confuſed, and are not what the Mind regards. When the Mind is much engaged, and the Thoughts intenſe, oftentimes the Imagination is more ſtrong, and the outward Idea more lively; eſpecially in Perſons of ſome Conſtitutions of Body. But there is a great Difference between theſe two Things, *viz. Lively Imaginations ariſing from ſtrong Affections*, and *Strong Affections ariſing from lively Imaginations*. The former may be, and doubtleſs often is, in Caſe of truly gracious Affections. The Affections don't ariſe from the Imagination, nor have any Dependance upon it; but on the contrary, the Imagination is only the accidental Effect, or Conſequent of the Affection, through the Infirmity of human Nature. But when the latter is the Caſe, as it often is, that the Affection ariſes from the Imagination, and is built upon it, as its Foundation, inſtead of a ſpiritual Illumination or Diſcovery; then is the Affection, however elevated, worthleſs and vain. And this is the Drift of what has been now ſaid, of Impreſſions on the Imagination. Having obſerved this, I proceed to another Mark of gracious Affections.

V. Truly gracious Affections are attended with a reaſonable and ſpiritual Conviction of the Judgment, of the Reality and Certainty of divine Things.

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This seems to be implied in the Text that was laid as the Foundation of this Discourse, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet* BELIEVING, *ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory.*

All those who are truly gracious Persons have a solid, full, thorough and effectual Conviction of the Truth of the great Things of the Gospel. I mean, that they no longer halt between two Opinions; the great Doctrines of the Gospel cease to be any longer doubtful Things, or Matters of Opinion, which, tho' probable, are yet disputable; but with them, they are Points settled and determined, as undoubted and indisputable; so that they are not afraid to venture their All upon their Truth. Their Conviction is an *effectual* Conviction; so that the great, spiritual, mysterious and invisible Things of the Gospel, have the *Influence* of real and certain Things upon them; they have the *Weight* and *Power* of real Things in their Hearts, and accordingly rule in their Affections, and govern them through the Course of their Lives. With Respect to Christ's being the Son of God, and Saviour of the World, and the great Things he has revealed concerning Himself, and his Father, and another World, they have not only a predominating Opinion that these Things are true, and so yield their Assent, as they do in many other Matters of doubtful Speculations; but they *see that it is really so:* Their Eyes are open'd, so that they see that really Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And as to the Things which Christ has revealed, of God's eternal Purposes and Designs, concerning fallen Man, and the glorious and everlasting Things prepared for the Saints in another World, they see that they are so indeed: And therefore these Things are of great Weight with them, and have a mighty Power upon their Hearts, and Influence over their Practice, in some Measure answerable to their infinite Importance.

That

That all true Christians have such a Kind of Conviction of the Truth of the Things of the Gospel, is abundantly manifest from the holy Scriptures. I will mention a few Places of many; Matth. xvi. 15, 16, 17. *But whom say ye that I am?* Simon Peter, *answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, blessed art thou* Simon Barjona:—*My Father which is in Heaven, hath revealed it unto thee.* John vi. 68, 69. *Thou hast the Words of eternal Life: And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* John xvii. 6, 7, 8. *I have manifested thy Name to the Men which thou gavest me out of the World.—Now they have known that all Things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee: For I have given unto them, the Words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me.* Acts viii. 37. *If thou believest with all thy Heart, thou mayest.* 2 Cor. iv. 11, 12, 13, 14. *We which live, are always delivered unto Death, for Jesus sake:—Death worketh in us;—we having the Spirit of Faith; according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak: Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.* Together with Verse 16. *For which Cause, we faint not.* And Verse 18. *While we look not at the Things which are seen,* &c. And Chap. v. 1. *For we know that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God.*—And Verse 6, 7, 8. *Therefore we are always confident; knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord: For we walk by Faith, not by Sight; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.* 2 Tim. i. 12. *For the which Cause, I also suffer these Things: Nevertheless, I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed; and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, against that Day.*

Heb.

Heb. iii. 6. *Whose House are we, if we hold fast the Confidence, and the Rejoicing of the Hope, firm unto the End.* Heb. xi. 1. *Now Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen:* Together with that whole Chapter. 1 John iv. 13, 14, 15, 16. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us; because he hath given us of his Spirit; and we have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the World. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed the Love that God hath to us.* Chap. v. 4, 5. *For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the World: And this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our Faith. Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*

Therefore truly gracious Affections are attended with such a Kind of Conviction and Perswasion of the Truth of the Things of the Gospel, and Sight of their Evidence and Reality, as these and other Scriptures speak of.

There are many religious Affections, which are not attended with such a Conviction of the Judgment. There are many Apprehensions and Ideas which some have, that they call divine Discoveries, which are affecting, but not convincing. Tho' for a little while, they may seem to be more perswaded of the Truth of the Things of Religion, than they used to be, and may yield a forward Assent, like many of Christ's Hearers, who believed for a while; yet they have no thorough and effectual Conviction; nor is there any great abiding Change in them, in this Respect, that whereas formerly they did not realize the great Things of the Gospel, now these Things, with Regard to Reality and Certainty, appear new to them, and they behold them quite in another View than they used to do. There are many Persons who have been exceedingly raised with religious Affections, and think they have been converted, they don't go about the World any more convinced of the Truth of the Gospel, than they used to be; or at least

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there is no remarkable Alteration; they are not Men who live under the Influence and Power of a realizing Conviction of the infinite and eternal Things which the Goſpel reveals: If they were, it would be impoſſible for them to live as they do. Becauſe their Affections are not attended with a thorough Conviction of the Mind, they are not at all to be depended on; however great a Shew and Noiſe they make, 'tis like the Blaze of Tow, or Crackling of Thorns, or like the forward flouriſhing Blade on ſtony Ground, that has no Root, nor Deepneſs of Earth to maintain its Life.

Some Perſons, under high Affections, and a confident Perſwaſion of their good Eſtate, have that, which they very ignorantly call a Seeing the Truth of the Word of God, and which is very far from it, after this Manner; they have ſome Text of Scripture coming to their Minds, in a ſudden and extraordinary Manner, immediately declaring to them (as they ſuppoſe) that their Sins are forgiven, or that God loves them, and will ſave them; and it may be have a Chain of Scriptures coming one after another, to the ſame Purpoſe; and they are convinced that it is Truth; *i. e.* they are confident that it is certainly ſo, that their Sins are forgiven, and God does love them, *&c.*--; they ſay they know it is ſo; and when the Words of Scripture are ſuggeſted to 'em, and as they ſuppoſe immediately ſpoken to 'em by God, in this Meaning, they are ready to cry out, *Truth, Truth! 'Tis certainly ſo! The Word of God is true!* And this they call a Seeing the Truth of the Word of God. Whereas the Whole of their Faith amounts to no more, than only a ſtrong Confidence of their own good Eſtate, and ſo a Confidence that thoſe Words are true, which they ſuppoſe tell them they are in a good Eſtate: When indeed (as was ſhewn before) there is no Scripture which declares that any Perſon is in a good Eſtate directly, or any other Way than by Conſequence. So that this, inſtead of being a real Sight of the Truth of the Word of God, is a Sight of nothing but a Phantom, and is

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all over a Deluſion. Truly to ſee the Truth of the Word of God, is to ſee the Truth of the Goſpel; which is the glorious Doctrine the Word of God contains, concerning God and Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him, and the World of Glory that he is entered into, and purchaſed for all them who believe; and not a Revelation that ſuch and ſuch particular Perſons are true Chriſtians, and ſhall go to Heaven. Therefore thoſe Affections which ariſe from no other Perſwaſion of the Truth of the Word of God than this, ariſe from Deluſion, and not true Conviction; and conſequently are themſelves deluſive and vain.

But if the religious Affections that Perſons have, do indeed ariſe from a ſtrong Perſwaſion of the Truth of the chriſtian Religion; their Affections are not the better, unleſs their Perſwaſion be a *reaſonable* Perſwaſion or Conviction. By a reaſonable Conviction, I mean a Conviction founded on real Evidence, or upon that which is a good Reaſon, or juſt Ground of Conviction. Men may have a ſtrong Perſwaſion that the chriſtian Religion is true, when their Perſwaſion is not at all built on Evidence, but altogether on Education, and the Opinion of others; as many *Mahometans* are ſtrongly perſwaded of the Truth of the *Mahometan* Religion, becauſe their Fathers, and Neighbours, and Nation believe it. That Belief of the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion which is built on the very ſame Grounds, with *Mahometans* Belief of the *Mahometan* Religion, is the ſame Sort of Belief. And though the Thing believed happens to be better; yet that don't make the Belief itſelf to be of a better Sort: For though the Thing believed happens to be true; yet the Belief of it is not owing to this Truth, but to Education. So that as the Conviction is no better than the *Mahometans* Conviction; ſo the Affections that flow from it, are no better, in themſelves, than the religious Affections of *Mahometans*.

But if that Belief of chriſtian Doctrines, which Perſon's Affections ariſe from, be not meerly from Education,

tion, but indeed from Reaſons and Arguments which are offered, it will not from thence neceſſarily follow, that their Affections are truly gracious: For in order to that, it is requiſite, not only that the Belief which their Affections ariſe from, ſhould be a *reaſonable*, but alſo a *ſpiritual* Belief or Conviction. I ſuppoſe none will doubt, but that ſome natural Men do yield a Kind of Aſſent of their Judgments to the Truth of the chriſtian Religion, from the rational Proofs or Arguments that are offered to evince it. *Judas*, without Doubt, thought *Jeſus* to be the *Meſſiah*, from the Things which he ſaw and heard; but yet all along was a Devil. So in *John* ii. 23, 24, 25. We read of *many that believed in Chriſt's Name, when they ſaw the Miracles that he did*; whom yet Chriſt knew had not that within them, which was to be depended on. So *Simon the Sorcerer* believed, when he beheld the Miracles and Signs which were done; but yet remained *in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and Bond of Iniquity*, Acts viii. 13, 23. And if there is ſuch a Belief or Aſſent of the Judgment in ſome natural Men, none can doubt but that religious Affections may ariſe from that Aſſent or Belief; as we read of ſome who *believed for a while*, that were greatly affected, and *anon, with Joy received the Word*.

'Tis evident that there is ſuch a Thing as a *ſpiritual* Belief or Conviction of the Truth of the Things of the Goſpel, or a Belief that is peculiar to thoſe who are ſpiritual, or who are regenerated, and have the Spirit of God, in his holy Communications, and dwelling in them as a vital Principle. So that the Conviction they have, don't only differ from that which natural Men have, in its Concomitants, in that it is accompanied with good Works; but the Belief itſelf is diverſe, the Aſſent and Conviction of the Judgment is of a Kind peculiar to thoſe who are ſpiritual, and that which natural Men are wholly deſtitute of. This is evident by the Scripture, if any Thing at all is ſo; John xvii. 8. *They have believed that thou didſt ſend me.* Tit. i. 1. *According to the Faith*

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of God's Elect, and the acknowledging of the Truth which is after Godlineſs. John xvi. 27. *The Father himſelf loveth you, becauſe ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.* 1 John iv. 15. *Whoſoever ſhall confeſs that Jeſus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.* Chap. v. 1. *Whoſoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God.* Ver. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Witneſs in himſelf.*

What a *ſpiritual Conviction* of the Judgment is, we are naturally led to determine, from what has been ſaid already, under the former Head of a *ſpiritual Underſtanding*. The Conviction of the Judgment ariſes from the Illumination of the Underſtanding: The paſſing of a right Judgment on Things, depends on an having a right Apprehenſion or Idea of Things. And therefore it follows, that a ſpiritual Conviction of the Truth of the great Things of the Goſpel, is ſuch a Conviction, as ariſes from having a ſpiritual View or Apprehenſion of thoſe Things in the Mind. And this is alſo evident from the Scripture, which often repreſents, that a ſaving Belief of the Reality and Divinity of the Things propoſed and exhibited to us in the Goſpel, is from the Spirit of God's enlightening the Mind, to have right Apprehenſions of the Nature of thoſe Things, and ſo as it were unveiling Things, or revealing them, and enabling the Mind to view them and ſee them as they are. Luke x. 21, 22. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou haſt* HID *theſe Things from the Wiſe and Prudent, and haſt* REVEALED *them unto Babes: Even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy Sight. All Things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no Man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father, and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will* REVEAL *him.* John vi. 40. *And this is the Will of him that ſent me, that every one that* SEETH *the Son, and* BELIEVETH *on him, may have everlaſting Life.* Where it is plain, that true Faith ariſes from a ſpiritual Sight of Chriſt.

Chriſt. And John xvii. 6, 7, 8. *I have* MANIFESTED *thy Name unto the Men which thou gaveſt me out of the World.—Now they have known that all Things whatſoever thou haſt given me, are of thee; for I have given unto them the Words which thou gaveſt me, and they have received them, and known ſurely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didſt ſend me.* Where Chriſt's manifeſting God's Name to the Diſciples, or giving them a true Apprehenſion and View of divine Things, was that whereby they knew that Chriſt's Doctrine was of God, and that Chriſt himſelf was of him, and was ſent by him. Matth. xvi. 16, 17. Simon Peter *ſaid, Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of the living God. And Jeſus anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Bleſſed art thou,* Simon Bar-jona, *for Fleſh and Blood hath not* REVEALED *it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven.* 1 John v. 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the Witneſs in himſelf.* Gal. i. 14, 15, 16. *Being more exceedingly zealous of the Traditions of my Fathers. But when it pleaſed God, who ſeparated me from my Mother's Womb, and called me by his Grace, to* REVEAL *his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Heathen, immediately I conferred not with Fleſh and Blood.*

If it be ſo, that that is a ſpiritual Conviction of the Divinity and Reality of the Things exhibited in the Goſpel, which ariſes from a ſpiritual Underſtanding of thoſe Things; I have ſhewn already what that is, *viz.* a Senſe and Taſte of the divine, ſupreme and holy Excellency and Beauty of thoſe Things. So that then is the Mind ſpiritually convinced of the Divinity and Truth of the great Things of the Goſpel, when that Conviction ariſes, either directly or remotely, from ſuch a Senſe or View of their divine Excellency and Glory, as is there exhibited. This clearly follows from Things that have been already ſaid; and for this the Scripture is very plain and expreſs. 2 Cor. iii. 3, 4, 5, 6. *But if our Goſpel be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt: In whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them*

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that BELIEVE *not, leſt the Light of the* GLORIOUS GOSPEL *of Chriſt, who is the Image of God, ſhould ſhine unto them. For we preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and ourſelves your Servants for Jeſus Sake. For God, who commanded the Light to ſhine out of Darkneſs, hath ſhined in our Hearts, to give the* LIGHT OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GLORY OF GOD, *in the Face of Jeſus Chriſt.* Together with the laſt Verſe of the foregoing Chapter, which introduces this, *But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glaſs, the* GLORY OF THE LORD, *are changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Nothing can be more evident, than that a ſaving Belief of the Goſpel, is here ſpoken of, by the Apoſtle, as ariſing from the Mind's being enlightened, to behold the divine Glory of the Things it exhibits.

This View or Senſe of the divine Glory, and unparallel'd Beauty of the Things exhibited to us in the Goſpel, has a Tendency to convince the Mind of their Divinity two Ways; *directly*, and more *indirectly* and *remotely*. 1. A View of this divine Glory *directly*, convinces the Mind of the Divinity of theſe Things, as this Glory is in itſelf a direct, clear, and all-conquering Evidence of it; eſpecially when clearly diſcovered, or when this ſupernatural Senſe is given in a good Degree.

He that has his Judgment thus *directly* convinced and aſſured of the Divinity of the Things of the Goſpel, by a clear View of their divine Glory, has a *reaſonable* Conviction; his Belief and Aſſurance is altogether agreeable to Reaſon; becauſe the divine Glory and Beauty of divine Things is in itſelf, real Evidence of their Divinity, and the moſt direct and ſtrong Evidence. He that truly ſees the divine, tranſcendent, ſupreme Glory of thoſe Things which are divine, does, as it were, know their Divinity intuitively; he not only argues that they are divine, but he ſees that they are divine; he ſees that in them wherein Divinity chiefly conſiſts; for in this Glory, which is ſo vaſtly and inexpreſſibly diſtinguiſhed

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from the Glory of artificial Things, and all other Glory, does mainly conſiſt the true Notion of Divinity: God is God, and diſtinguiſhed from all other Beings, and exalted above them, chiefly by his divine Beauty, which is infinitely diverſe from all other Beauty. They therefore that ſee the Stamp of this Glory in divine Things, they ſee Divinity in them, they ſee God in them, and ſo ſee them to be divine; becauſe they ſee that in them wherein the trueſt Idea of Divinity does conſiſt. Thus a Soul may have a Kind of intuitive Knowledge of the Divinity of the Things exhibited in the Goſpel; not that he judges the Doctrines of the Goſpel to be from God, without any Argument or Deduction at all; but it is without any long Chain of Arguments; the Argument is but one, and the Evidence direct; the Mind aſcends to the Truth of the Goſpel but by one Step, and that is its divine Glory.

It would be very ſtrange, if any profeſſing Chriſtian ſhould deny it to be poſſible that there ſhould be an Excellency in divine Things, which is ſo tranſcendent, and exceedingly different from what is in other Things, that if it were ſeen, would evidently diſtinguiſh them. We can't rationally doubt, but that Things that are *divine*, that appertain to the ſupreme Being, are vaſtly different from Things that are *humane*; that there is a god-like, high, and glorious Excellency in them, that does ſo diſtinguiſh them from the Things which are of Men, that the Difference is ineffable; and therefore ſuch, as, if ſeen, will have a moſt convincing, ſatisfying Influence upon any one, that they are what they are, *viz.* divine. Doubtleſs there is that Glory and Excellency in the divine Being, by which he is ſo infinitely diſtinguiſhed from all other Beings, that if it were ſeen, he might be known by it. It would therefore be very unreaſonable to deny that it is poſſible for God, to give Manifeſtations of this diſtinguiſhing Excellency, in Things by which he is pleaſed to make himſelf known; and that this diſtinguiſhing Excellency may be clearly ſeen in them. There

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are *natural* Excellencies that are very evidently distinguishing of the Subjects of Authors, to any one who beholds them. How vastly is the Speech of an understanding Man different from that of a little Child! And how greatly distinguished is the Speech of some Men of great Genius, as *Homer*, *Cicero*, *Milton*, *Locke*, *Addison*, and others, from that of many other understanding Men! There are no Limits to be set to the Degrees of Manifestations of mental Excellency, that there may be in Speech. But the Appearances of the *natural* Perfections of God, in the Manifestations he makes of himself, may doubtless be unspeakably more evidently distinguishing, than the Appearances of those Worms of the Dust, in which they differ one from another. He that is well acquainted with Mankind, and their Works, by viewing the Sun, may know it is no human Work. And 'tis reasonable to suppose, that when Christ comes at the End of the World, in the Glory of his Father, it will be with such ineffable Appearances of Divinity, as will leave no Doubt to the Inhabitants of the World, even the most obstinate Infidels, that he who appears, is a divine Person. But above all, do the Manifestations of the *moral* and *spiritual* Glory of the divine Being (which is the proper Beauty of the Divinity) bring their own Evidence, and tend to assure the Heart. Thus the Diciples were assured that Jesus was the Son of God, for *they beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*, John i. 14. When Christ appeared in the Glory of his Transfiguration to his Disciples, with that outward Glory, to their bodily Eyes, which was a sweet and admirable Symbol and Semblance of his spiritual Glory, together with his spiritual Glory itself, manifested to their Minds; the Manifestation of Glory was such, as did perfectly, and with good Reason, assure them of his Divinity; as appears by what one of them, *viz.* the Apostle *Peter*, says concerning it, 2 Pet. i. 16. 17. 18. *For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the Power and Coming*

ing of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were Eye-witnesses of his Majesty: For he received from God the Father, Honour and Glory; when there came such a Voice to him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this Voice which came from Heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy Mount. The Apostle calls that Mount *the holy Mount*, because the Manifestations of Christ, which were there made to their Minds, and which their Minds where especially impress'd and ravished with, was the Glory of his *Holiness*, or the Beauty of his *moral Excellency*; or, as another of these Diciples, who saw it, expresses it, *His Glory*, as *full of Grace and Truth.*

Now this distinguishing Glory of the divine Being has it's brightest Appearance and Manifestation, in the Things proposed and exhibited to us in the Gospel, the Doctrines there taught, the Word there spoken, and the divine Counsels, Acts and Works there revealed. These Things have the clearest, most admirable, and distinguishing Representations and Exhibitions of the Glory of God's moral Perfections, that ever were made to the World. And if there be such a distinguishing, evidential Manifestation of divine Glory in the Gospel, 'tis reasonable to suppose that there may be such a Thing as Seeing it: What should hinder but that it may be seen? 'Tis no Argument that it can't be seen, that some don't see it; tho' they may be discerning Men in temporal Matters. If there be such ineffable, distinguishing, evidential Excellencies in the Gospel, 'tis reasonable to suppose that they are such as are not to be discerned, but by the special Influence and Enlightnings of the Spirit of God. There is need of uncommon Force of Mind to discern the distinguishing Excellencies of the Works of Authors of great Genius: Those Things in *Milton*, which to mean Judges, appear tasteless, and Imperfections, are his inimitable Excellencies in the Eyes of those who are of greater Discerning, and better Taste. And if there be a Book, which God is the Author of,

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'tis moſt reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the diſtinguiſhing Glories of his Word are of ſuch a Kind, as that the Sin and Corruption of Men's Hearts, which above all Things alienates Men from the Diety, and makes the Heart dull and ſtupid to any Senſe or Taſte of thoſe Things wherein the moral Glory of the divine Perfections conſiſts; I ſay, 'tis but reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that this would blind Men from diſcerning the Beauties of ſuch a Book; and that therefore they will not ſee them, but as God is pleaſed to enlighten them, and reſtore an holy Taſte, to diſcern and reliſh divine Beauties.

This Senſe of the ſpiritual Excellency and Beauty of divine Things, does alſo tend *directly* to convince the Mind of the Truth of the Goſpel, as there are very many of the moſt important Things declared in the Goſpel, that are hid from the Eyes of natural Men, the Truth of which does in Effect conſiſt in this Excellency, or does ſo immediately depend upon it and reſult from it; that in this Excellency's being ſeen, the Truth of thoſe Things is ſeen. As ſoon as ever the Eyes are opened to behold the holy Beauty and Amiableneſs that is in divine Things, a Multitude of moſt important Doctrines of the Goſpel, that depend upon it, (which all appear ſtrange and dark to natural Men) are at once ſeen to be true. As for Inſtance, hereby appears the Truth of what the Word of God declares concerning the exceeding Evil of Sin; for the ſame Eye that diſcerns the tranſcendent Beauty of Holineſs, neceſſarily therein ſees the exceeding Odiouſneſs of Sin: The ſame Taſte which reliſhes the Sweetneſs of true moral Good, taſtes the Bitterneſs of moral Evil. And by this Means a Man ſees his own Sinfulneſs and Loathſomneſs; for he has now a Senſe to diſcern Objects of this Nature; and ſo ſees the Truth of what the Word of God declares concerning the exceeding Sinfulneſs of Mankind, which before he did not ſee. He now ſees the dreadful Pollution of his Heart, and the deſperate Depravity of his Nature, in a new Manner; for his Soul has now a Senſe

given it to feel the Pain of such a Disease: And this shows him the Truth of what the Scripture reveals concerning the Corruption of Man's Nature, his original Sin, and the ruinous undone Condition Man is in, and his need of a Saviour, his need of the mighty Power of God to renew his Heart and change his Nature. Men by seeing the true Excellency of Holiness, do see the Glory of all those Things, which both Reason and Scripture shew to be in the divine Being; for it has been shown that the Glory of them depend on this: And hereby they see the Truth of all that the Scripture declares concerning God's glorious Excellency and Majesty, his being the Fountain of all Good, the only Happiness of the Creature, &c. And this again shews the Mind the Truth of what the Scripture teaches concerning the Evil of Sin against so glorious a God; and also the Truth of what it teaches concerning Sin's just Desert of that dreadful Punishment which it reveals; and also concerning the Impossibility of our offering any Satisfaction, or sufficient Atonement, for that which is so infinitely evil and heinous. And this again shews the Truth of what the Scripture reveals concerning the Necessity of a Saviour, to offer an Atonement of infinite Value for Sin. And this Sense of spiritual Beauty that has been spoken of, enables the Soul to see the Glory of those Things which the Gospel reveals concerning the Person of Christ; and so enables to see the exceeding Beauty and Dignity of his Person, appearing in what the Gospel exhibits of his Word, Works, Acts and Life: And this Apprehension of the superlative Dignity of his Person, shews the Truth of what the Gospel declares concerning the Value of his Blood and Righteousness, and so the infinite Excellency of that Offering he has made to God for us, and so its Sufficiency to atone for our Sins, and recommend us to God. And thus the Spirit of God discovers the Way of Salvation by Christ: Thus the Soul sees the Fitness and Suitableness of this Way of Salvation, the admirable Wisdom of the Contrivance,

trivance, and the perfect Anſwerableneſs of the Proviſion that the Goſpel exhibits, (as made for us) to our Neceſſities. A Senſe of true divine Beauty being given to the Soul, the Soul diſcerns the Beauty of every Part of the Goſpel Scheme. This alſo ſhews the Soul the Truth of what the Word of God declares concerning Man's chief Happineſs, as conſiſting in holy Exerciſes and Enjoyments. This ſhews the Truth of what the Goſpel declares concerning the unſpeakable Glory of the heavenly State. And what the Prophecies of the old Teſtament, and the Writings of the Apoſtles declare concerning the Glory of the Meſſiah's Kingdom, is now all plain; and alſo what the Scripture teaches concerning the Reaſons and Grounds of our Duty. The Truth of all theſe Things revealed in the Scripture, and many more that might be mentioned, appear to the Soul, only by imparting that ſpiritual Taſte of divine Beauty, which has been ſpoken of; they being hidden Things to the Soul before.

And beſides all this, the Truth of all thoſe Things which the Scripture ſays about experimental Religion, is hereby known; for they are now experienced. And this convinces the Soul that one who knew the Heart of Man, better than we know our own Hearts, and perfectly knew the Nature of Virtue and Holineſs, was the Author of the Scriptures. And the opening to View, with ſuch Clearneſs, ſuch a World of wonderful and glorious Truth in the Goſpel, that before was unknown, being quite above the View of a natural Eye, but now appearing ſo clear and bright, has a powerful and invincible Influence on the Soul, to perſuade of the Divinity of the Goſpel.

Unleſs Men may come to a reaſonable ſolid Perſuaſion and Conviction of the Truth of the Goſpel, by the internal Evidences of it, in the Way that has been ſpoken of, viz. By a Sight of it's Glory; 'tis impoſſible that thoſe who are illiterate, and unacquainted with Hiſtory, ſhould have any thorough and effectual Conviction of

it at all. They may without this, ſee a great deal of Probability of it; it may be reaſonable for them to give much Credit to what learned Men, and Hiſtorians tell them; and they may tell them ſo much, that it may look very probable and rational to them, that the chriſtian Religion is true; and ſo much that they would be very unreaſonable not to entertain this Opinion. But to have a Conviction, ſo clear, and evident, and aſſuring, as to be ſufficient to induce them, with Boldneſs, to ſell all, confidently and fearleſsly to run the Venture of the Loſs of all Things, and of enduring the moſt exquiſite and long-continued Torments, and to trample the World under Foot, and count all Things but Dung, for Chriſt; the Evidence they can have from Hiſtory, cannot be ſufficient. It is impoſſible that Men, who have not ſomething of a general View of the hiſtorical World, or the Series of Hiſtory from Age to Age, ſhould come at the Force of Arguments for the Truth of Chriſtianity, drawn from Hiſtory, to that Degree, as effectually to induce them to venture their all upon it. After all that learned Men have ſaid to them, there will remain innumerable Doubts on their Minds: They will be ready, when pinched with ſome great Trial of their Faith, to ſay, "How do I know this, or that? How do I know "when theſe Hiſtories were written? Learned Men tell "me theſe Hiſtories were ſo and ſo atteſted in the Day "of them; but how do I know that there were ſuch "Atteſtations then? They tell me there is equal Reaſon "to believe theſe Facts, as any whatſoever that are "related at ſuch a Diſtance; but how do I know that "other Facts which are related of thoſe Ages, ever "were?" Thoſe who have not ſomething of a general View of the Series of hiſtorical Events, and of the State of Mankind from Age to Age, cannot ſee the clear Evidence from Hiſtory, of the Truth of Facts, in diſtant Ages; but there will endleſs Doubts and Scruples remain.

But

But the Gospel was not given only for learned Men. There are at least Nineteen in Twenty, if not Ninety-nine in an Hundred, of those for whom the Scriptures were written, that are not capable of any certain or effectual Conviction of the divine Authority of the Scriptures, by such Arguments as learned Men make Use of. If Men who have been brought up in Heathenism, must wait for a clear and certain Conviction of the Truth of Christianity, 'till they have Learning and Acquaintance with the Histories of politer Nations, enough to see clearly the Force of such Kind of Arguments; it will make the Evidence of the Gospel, to them, immensely cumbersome, and will render the Propagation of the Gospel among them, infinitely difficult. Miserable is the Condition of the *Houssatunnuck Indians*, and others, who have lately manifested a Desire to be instructed in Christianity; if they can come at no Evidence of the Truth of Christianity, sufficient to induce them to sell all for Christ, in any other Way but this.

'Tis unreasonable to suppose, that God has provided for his People, no more than probable Evidences of the Truth of the Gospel. He has with great Care, abundantly provided, and given them, the most convincing, assuring, satisfying and manifold Evidence of his Faithfulness in the Covenant of Grace; and as *David* says, *made a Covenant, ordered in all Things and sure.* Therefore it is rational to suppose, that at the same Time, he would not fail of ordering the Matter so, that there should not be wanting, as great, and clear Evidence, *that this is his Covenant*, and that these Promises are his Promises; or, which is the same Thing, that the Christian Religion is true, and that the Gospel is his Word. Otherwise in vain are those great Assurances he has given of his Faithfulness in his Covenant, by confirming it with his Oath, and so variously establishing it by Seals and Pledges. For the Evidence that it is his Covenant, is properly the Foundation on which all the Force and

Effect

Effect of those other Assurances do stand. We may therefore undoubtedly suppose and conclude, that there is some Sort of Evidence which God has given, that this Covenant, and these Promises are his, beyond all meer Probability; that there are some Grounds of Assurance of it held forth, which, if we are not blind to them, tend to give an higher Perswasion, than any arguing from History, human Tradition, *&c.* which the Illiterate, and Unacquainted with History, are capable of; yea, that which is good Ground of the highest and most perfect Assurance, that Mankind have in any Case whatsoever; agreeable to those high Expressions which the Apostle uses, Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near in* FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH. And Col. ii. 2. *That their Hearts might be comforted, being knit together in Love, and unto* ALL RICHES, OF THE FULL ASSURANCE OF UNDERSTANDING, *to the Acknowledgement of the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.* It is reasonable to suppose, that God would give the greatest Evidence, of those Things which are greatest, and the Truth of which is of greatest Importance to us: And that we therefore, if we are wise, and act rationally, shall have the greatest Desire of having full, undoubting, and perfect Assurance of. But it is certain, that such an Assurance is not to be attained, by the greater Part of them who live under the Gospel, by Arguments fetch'd from ancient Traditions, Histories, and Monuments.

And if we come to Fact and Experience, there is not the least Reason to suppose, that one in an Hundred of those who have been sincere Christians, and have had a Heart to sell all for Christ, have come by their Conviction of the Truth of the Gospel, this Way. If we read over the Histories of the many Thousands that died Martyrs for Christ, since the Beginning of the Reformation, and have chearfully undergone extreme Tortures, in a Confidence of the Truth of the Gospel, and consider their Circumstances and Advantages; how

few

few of them were there, that we can reasonably suppose, ever came by their assured Perswasion, this Way; or indeed for whom it was possible, reasonably to receive so full and strong an Assurance, from such Arguments! Many of them were weak Women and Children, and the greater Part of them illiterate Persons, many of whom had been brought up in popish Ignorance and Darkness, and were but newly come out of it, and lived and died in Times, wherein those Arguments for the Truth of Christianity from Antiquity and History, had been but very imperfectly handled. And indeed, 'tis but very lately that these Arguments have been set in a clear and convincing Light, even by learned Men themselves: And since it has been done, there never were fewer thorough Believers, among those who have been educated in the true Religion: Infidelity never prevailed so much, in any Age, as in this, wherein these Arguments are handled to the greatest Advantage.

The true Martyrs of Jesus Christ, are not those who have only been strong in Opinion, that the Gospel of Christ is true, but *those that have seen the Truth of it*; as the very Name of Martyrs or Witnesses (by which they are called in Scripture) implies. Those are very improperly called Witnesses of the Truth of any Thing, who only declare they are very much of Opinion that such a Thing is true. Those only are proper Witnesses who can, and do testify, that they have seen the Truth of the Thing they assert; John iii. 11. *We speak that we do know, and* testify *that we have seen.* John i. 34. *And I* saw, *and* bear Record, *that this is the Son of God.* 1 John iv. 14. *And we have* seen, *and do* testify, *that the Father sent the Son, to be the Saviour of the World.* Acts xxii. 14, 15. *The God of our Fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst* know *his Will, and* see *that just One, and shouldst* hear *the Voice of his Mouth: For thou shalt be his* Witness *unto all Men, of what thou hast* seen *and* heard. But the true Martyrs of Jesus Christ are called his Witnesses; and all the Saints, who by their holy

holy Practice under great Trials, declare that Faith, *which is the* SUBSTANCE *of Things hoped for, and the* EVIDENCE *of Things not seen*, are called Witneſſes; *Heb.* xi. 1, and xii. 1, becauſe by their Profeſſion and Practice, they declare their Aſſurance of the Truth and Divinity of the Goſpel, having had the Eyes of their Minds enlightened, to ſee Divinity in the Goſpel, or to behold that unparallel'd, ineffably excellent, and truly divine Glory ſhining in it, which is altogether diſtinguiſhing, evidential, and convincing: So that they may truly be ſaid to have ſeen God in it, and to have ſeen that it is indeed divine: And ſo can ſpeak in the Style of Witneſſes; and not only ſay, that *they think* the Goſpel is divine, but ſay, that *it is divine*, giving it in as their Teſtimony, becauſe they have ſeen it to be ſo. Doubtleſs *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, after they had ſeen that excellent Glory of Chriſt in the Mount, would have been ready, when they came down, to ſpeak in the Language of Witneſſes, and to ſay poſitively, that *Jeſus is the Son of God*; as *Peter* ſays, *they were Eye-witneſſes*, 2 Pet. i. 16. And ſo all Nations will be ready poſitively to ſay this, when they ſhall behold his Glory at the Day of Judgment; though what will be univerſally ſeen, will be only his natural Glory, and not his moral and ſpiritual Glory, which is much more diſtinguiſhing. But yet, it muſt be noted, that among thoſe who have a ſpiritual Sight of the divine Glory of the Goſpel, there is a great Variety of Degrees of Strength of Faith, as there is a vaſt Variety of the Degrees of Clearneſs of Views of this Glory: But there is no true and ſaving Faith, or ſpiritual Conviction of the Judgment, of the Truth of the Goſpel, that has nothing in it, of this Manifeſtation of its internal Evidence, in ſome Degree. The Goſpel of the bleſſed God don't go abroad a begging for its Evidence, ſo much as ſome think; it has its higheſt and moſt proper Evidence in itſelf. Tho' great Uſe may be made of external Arguments, they are not

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to be neglected, but highly prized and valued; for they may be greatly ſerviceable to awaken Unbelievers, and bring them to ſerious Conſideration, and to confirm the Faith of true Saints: Yea, they may be in ſome Reſpects ſubſervient *to the begetting* of a ſaving Faith in Men. Though what was ſaid before remains true, that there is no ſpiritual Conviction of the Judgment, but what ariſes from an Apprehenſion of the ſpiritual Beauty and Glory of divine Things: For, as has been obſerved, this Apprehenſion or View has a Tendency to convince the Mind of the Truth of the Goſpel, two Ways; either directly or indirectly. Having therefore already obſerved how it does this directly, I proceed now,

2. To obſerve how a View of this divine Glory does convince the Mind of the Truth of Chriſtianity, more indirectly.

Firſt, It doth ſo as the Prejudices of the Heart againſt the Truth of divine Things are hereby removed, ſo that the Mind thereby lies open to the Force of the Reaſons which are offered. The Mind of Man is naturally full of Enmity againſt the Doctrines of the Goſpel; which is a Diſadvantage to thoſe Arguments that prove their Truth, and cauſes them to loſe their Force upon the Mind: But when a Perſon has diſcovered to him the divine Excellency of chriſtian Doctrines, this deſtroys that Enmity, and removes the Prejudices, and ſanctifies the Reaſon, and cauſes it to be open and free. Hence is a vaſt Difference, as to the Force that Arguments have to convince the Mind. Hence was the very different Effect, which Chriſt's Miracles had to to convince the *Diſciples*, from what they had to convince the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*: Not that they had a ſtronger Reaſon, or had their Reaſon more improved; but their Reaſon was ſanctified, and thoſe blinding Prejudices, which the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* were under, were removed, by the Senſe they had of the Excellency of Chriſt and his Doctrine.

Secondly,

Secondly, It not only removes the Hindrances of Reaſon, but poſitively helps Reaſon. It makes even the ſpeculative Notions more lively. It aſſiſts and engages the Attention of the Mind to that Kind of Objects; which cauſes it to have a clearer View of them, and more clearly to ſee their mutual Relations. The Ideas themſelves, which otherwiſe are dim and obſcure, by this Means have a Light caſt upon them, and are impreſs'd with greater Strength; ſo that the Mind can better judge of them, as he that beholds the Objects on the Face of the Earth, when the Light of the Sun is caſt upon them, is under greater Advantage to diſcern them, in their true Forms, and mutual Relations, and to ſee the Evidences of divine Wiſdom and Skill in their Contrivance, than he that ſees them in a dim Star-light, or Twilight.

What has been ſaid, may ſerve in ſome Meaſure to ſhew the Nature of a ſpiritual Conviction of the Judgment of the Truth and Reality of divine Things; and ſo to diſtinguiſh truly gracious Affections from others; for gracious Affections are evermore attended with ſuch a Conviction of the Judgment.

But before I diſmiſs this Head, it will be needful to obſerve the Ways whereby ſome are deceived, with Reſpect to this Matter; and take Notice of ſeveral Things, that are ſometimes taken for a ſpiritual and ſaving Belief of the Truth of the Things of Religion, which are indeed very diverſe from it.

1. There is a Degree of Conviction of the Truth of the great Things of Religion, that ariſes from the common Enlightnings of the Spirit of God. That more lively and ſenſible Apprehenſion of the Things of Religion, with Reſpect to what is *natural* in them, ſuch as natural Men have who are under Awakenings and common Illuminations, will give ſome Degree of Conviction of the Truth of divine Things, beyond what they had before they were thus enlightened. For here-

by

by they see the Manifestations there are, in the Revelation made in the holy Scriptures, and Things exhibited in that Revelation, of the natural Perfections of God, such as his Greatness, Power, and awful Majesty; which tends to convince the Mind, that this is the Word of a great and terrible God. From the Tokens there are of God's Greatness and Majesty in his Word and Works, which they have a great Sense of, from the common Influence of the Spirit of God, they may have a much greater Conviction, that these are indeed the Word and Works of a very great invisible Being. And the lively Apprehension of the Greatness of God, which natural Men may have, tends to make them sensible of the great Guilt, which Sin against such a God brings, and the Dreadfulness of his Wrath for Sin. And this tends to cause them more easily and fully to believe the Revelation the Scripture makes of another World, and of the extreme Misery it threatens, there to be inflicted on Sinners. And so from that Sense of the great natural Good there is in the Things of Religion, which is sometimes given in common Illuminations, Men may be the more induced to believe the Truth of Religion. These Things Persons may have, and yet have no Sense of the Beauty and Amiableness of the moral and holy Excellency that is in the Things of Religion; and therefore no spiritual Conviction of their Truth. But yet such Convictions are sometimes mistaken, for saving Convictions, and the Affections flowing from them, for saving Affections.

2. The extraordinary Impressions which are made on the Imaginations of some Persons, in the Visions, and immediate strong Impulses and Suggestions that they have, as though they saw Sights, and had Words spoken to them, may, and often do beget a strong Perswasion of the Truth of invisible Things. Though the general Tendency of such Things, in their final Issue, is to draw Men off from the Word of God, and to cause

them

them to reject the Gospel, and to establish Unbelief and Atheism; yet for the present, they may, and often do beget a confident Perswasion of the Truth of some Things that are revealed in the Scriptures; however their Confidence is founded in Delusion, and so nothing worth. As for Instance, if a Person has by some invisible Agent, immediately and strongly impressed on his Imagination, the Appearance of a bright Light, and glorious Form of a Person seated on a Throne, with great external Majesty and Beauty, uttering some remarkable Words, with great Force and Energy: The Person who is the Subject of such an Operation, may be from hence confident, that there are invisible Agents, spiritual Beings from what he has experienced, knowing that he had no Hand himself in this extraordinary Effect, which he has experienced: And he may also be confident, that this is Christ, whom he saw and heard speaking: And this may make him confident, that there is a Christ, and that Christ reigns on a Throne in Heaven, as he saw him; and may be confident, that the Words which he heard him speak are true, *&c.*—In the same Manner, as the lying Miracles of the Papists, may for the present, beget in the Minds of the ignorant deluded People, a strong Perswasion of the Truth of many Things declared in the New-Testament. Thus when the Images of Christ, in popish Churches, are on some extraordinary Occasions, made by Priest-craft to appear to the People as if they wept, and shed fresh Blood, and moved, and uttered such and such Words; the People may be verily perswaded that it is a Miracle wrought by Christ himself; and from thence may be confident there is a Christ, and that what they are told of his Death and Sufferings, and Resurrection, and Ascension, and present Government of the World is true; for they may look upon this Miracle, as a certain Evidence of all these Things, and a Kind of occular Demonstration of them. This may be the Influence of these lying Wonders for the present; though the general Tendency of them is not to convince

that

that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, but finally to promote Atheism. Even the Intercourse which *Satan* has with Witches, and their often experiencing his immediate Power, has a Tendency to convince them of the Truth of some of the Doctrines of Religion; as particularly the Reality of an invisible World, or World of Spirits, contrary to the Doctrine of the *Sadduces*. The general Tendency of *Satan*'s Influences is Delusion: But yet he may mix some Truth with his Lies, that his Lies may not be so easily discovered.

There are Multitudes that are deluded with a counterfeit Faith, from Impressions on their Imagination, in the Manner which has been now spoken of. They say they know that there is a God, for they have seen him; they know that Christ is the Son of God, for they have seen him in his Glory; they know that Christ died for Sinners, for they have seen him hanging on the Cross, and his Blood running from his Wounds; they know there is a Heaven and a Hell, for they have seen the Misery of the damned Souls in Hell, and the Glory of Saints and Angels in Heaven, (meaning some external Representations, strongly impress'd on their Imagination) they know that the Scriptures are the Word of God, and that such and such Promises in particular, are his Word, for they have heard him speak 'em to them, they came to their Minds suddenly and immediately from God, without their having any Hand in it.

3. Persons may seem to have their Belief of the Truth of the Things of Religion greatly increased, when the Foundation of it is only a Perswasion they have received, of their Interest in them. They first, by some Means or other, take up a Confidence, that if there be a Christ and Heaven, they are their's; and this prejudices them more in favour of the Truth of them. When they hear of the great and glorious Things of Religion, 'tis with this Notion, that all these Things belong to them; and hence easily become confident that they are

true

true: They look upon it to be greatly for their Intereſt that they ſhould be true. 'Tis very obvious what a ſtrong Influence Men's Intereſt and Inclinations have on their Judgments. While a natural Man thinks, that if there be a Heaven and Hell; the latter, and not the former, belongs to him; then he will be hardly perſwaded, that there is a Heaven or Hell: But when he comes to be perſwaded, that Hell belongs only to other Folks, and not to him; then he can eaſily allow the Reality of Hell, and cry out of others Senſeleſſneſs and Sottiſhneſs, in neglecting Means of Eſcape from it: And being confident that he is a Child of God, and that God has promiſed Heaven to him, he may ſeem ſtrong in the Faith of its Reality, and may have a great Zeal againſt that Infidelity which denies it.

But I proceed to another diſtinguiſhing Sign of gracious Affections.

VI. Gracious Affections are attended with *evangelical Humiliation.*

Evangelical Humiliation is a Senſe that a Chriſtian has of his own utter Inſufficiency, Deſpicableneſs, and Odiouſneſs, with an anſwerable Frame of Heart.

There is a Diſtinction to be made between a *legal* and *evangelical* Humiliation. The Former is what Men may be the Subjects of, while they are yet in a State of Nature, and have no gracious Affection; the Latter is peculiar to true Saints: The Former is from the common Influence of the Spirit of God, aſſiſting natural Principles, and eſpecially natural Conſcience; the Latter is from the ſpecial Influences of the Spirit of God, implanting and exerciſing ſupernatural and divine Principles: The Former is from the Mind's being aſſiſted to a greater Senſe of the Things of Religion, as to their natural Properties and Qualities, and particularly of the natural Perfections of God, ſuch as his Greatneſs, terrible Majeſty, *&c.* which were manifeſted to the Congregation of *Iſrael*, in giving the Law at Mount

Mount *Sinai*; the Latter is from a Senſe of the tranſcendent Beauty of divine Things in their moral Qualities: In the Former a Senſe of the awful Greatneſs, and natural Perfections of God, and of the Strictneſs of his Law, convinces Men, that they are exceeding ſinful and guilty, and expoſed to the Wrath of God, as it will wicked Men and Devils at the Day of Judgment; but they don't ſee their own *Odiouſneſs* on the Account of Sin; they don't ſee the hateful Nature of Sin; a Senſe of this is given in *evangelical Humiliation*, by a Diſcovery of the Beauty of God's Holineſs and moral Perfection. In a *legal Humiliation*, Men are made ſenſible that they are little and nothing before the great and terrible God, and that they are undone, and wholly inſufficient to help themſelves; as wicked Men will be at the Day of Judgment: But they have not *an anſwerable Frame of Heart*, conſiſting in a Diſpoſition to abaſe themſelves, and exalt God alone: This Diſpoſition is given only in evangelical Humiliation, by overcoming the Heart, and changing its Inclination, by a Diſcovery of God's holy Beauty: In a legal Humiliation, the Conſcience is convinced; as the Conſciences of all will be moſt perfectly at the Day of Judgment; but becauſe there is no ſpiritual Underſtanding, the Will is not bowed, nor the Inclination altered: This is done only in evangelical Humiliation. In legal Humiliation Men are brought to deſpair of helping themſelves; in Evangelical, they are brought voluntarily to deny and renounce themſelves: In the Former they are ſubdued and forced to the Ground; in the Latter, they are brought ſweetly to yield, and freely and with Delight to proſtrate themſelves at the Feet of God.

Legal Humiliation has in it no ſpiritual Good, nothing of the Nature of true Virtue; whereas evangelical Humiliation is that wherein the excellent Beauty of chriſtian Grace does very much conſiſt. Legal Humiliation is uſeful, as a Means in order to Evangelical; as a common Knowledge of the Things of Religion is a

Means

Means requiſite in order to ſpiritual Knowledge. Men may be legally humbled and have no *Humility*; as the Wicked at the Day of Judgment will be thoroughly convinced that they have no Righteouſneſs, but are altogether ſinful, and exceeding guilty, and juſtly expoſed to eternal Damnation, and be fully ſenſible of their own Helpleſſneſs, without the leaſt Mortification of the Pride of their Hearts: But the Eſſence of evangelical Humiliation conſiſts in ſuch *Humility*, as becomes a Creature, in itſelf exceeding ſinful, under a Diſpenſation of Grace; conſiſting in a mean Eſteem of himſelf, as in himſelf nothing, and altogether contemptible and odious; attended with a Mortification of a Diſpoſition to exalt himſelf, and a free Renunciation of his own Glory.

This is a great and moſt eſſential Thing in true Religion. The whole Frame of the Goſpel, and every Thing appertaining to the new Covenant, and all God's Diſpenſations towards fallen Man, are calculated to bring to paſs this Effect in the Hearts of Men. They that are deſtitute of this, have no true Religion, whatever Profeſſion they may make, and how high ſoever their religious Affections may be; Hab. ii. 4. *Behold, his Soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him; but the Juſt ſhall live by his Faith: i. e.* He ſhall live by his Faith on God's Righteouſneſs and Grace, and not his own Goodneſs and Excellency. God has abundantly manifeſted in his Word, that This is what he has a peculiar Reſpect to in his Saints, and that nothing is acceptable to him without it; Pſal. xxxiv. 18. *The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite Spirit.* Pſal. li. 17. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit; a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.* Pſal. cxxxviii. 6. *Though the Lord be High, he hath Reſpect unto the Lowly.* Prov. iii. 34. *He giveth Grace unto the Lowly.* Iſai. lvii. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity, whoſe Name is Holy, I dwell in the high*

and

and holy Place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite Ones. Iſai. lxvi. 1, 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord, the Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footſtool:—But to this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word,* Micah vi. 8. *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man, what is good; and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Matth. v. 3, *Bleſſed are the Poor in Spirit: For their's is the Kingdom of God.* Matth. xviii. 3, 4. *Verily I ſay unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoſoever therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little Child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven.* Mark x. 15. *Verily I ſay unto you, whoſoever ſhall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, he ſhall not enter therein.* The *Centurion* that we have an Account of *Luke* vii. acknowledged, that *he was not worthy that Chriſt ſhould enter under his Roof,* and that *he was not worthy to come to him.* See the Manner of the Woman's coming to Chriſt that was a Sinner, Luke vii. 37, &c. *And behold a Woman in the City which was a Sinner, when ſhe knew that Jeſus ſat at Meat in the Phariſee's Houſe, brought an Alabaſter-Box of Ointment, and ſtood at his Feet behind him weeping, and began to waſh his Feet with her Tears, and did wipe them with the Hairs of her Head.* She did not think the Hair of her Head, which is the natural Crown and Glory of a Woman, (1 *Cor.* xi. 15.) too good to wipe the Feet of Chriſt withal. Jeſus moſt graciouſly accepted her, and ſays to her, *Thy Faith hath ſaved thee, go in Peace.* The Woman of *Canaan* ſubmi ted to Chriſt, in his ſaying, *It is not meet to take the Children's Bread, and to caſt it to Dogs,* and did as it were own that ſhe was worthy to be called a Dog; whereupon Chriſt ſays unto her, *O Woman, great is thy Faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt.* Matth. xv. 26, 27. The

Prodigal Son ſaid, *I will ariſe and go to my Father, and I will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son; make me as one of thy hired Servants*; Luke xv. 18, &c. See alſo Luke xviii. 9, &c. *And he ſpake this Parable unto certain that truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others*, &c.—*The Publican ſtanding afar off, would not ſo much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but ſmote upon his Breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a Sinner. I tell you, this Man went down to his Houſe juſtified, rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.* Matth. xxviii. 9. *And they came, and held him by the Feet, and worſhipped him.* Col. iii. 12. *Put ye on, as the Elect of God,—Humbleneſs of Mind.* Ezek. xx. 41, 43. *I will accept you with your ſweet Savour, when I bring you out from the People*, &c. —*And there ſhall ye remember your Ways, and all your Doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye ſhall loath yourſelves in your own Sight, for all your Evils that you have committed.* Chap. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31. *A new Heart alſo will I give unto you,—And I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes*, &c.—*Then ſhall ye remember your own evil Ways, and your Doings that were not good, and ſhall loath yourſelves in your own Sight, for your Iniquities, and for your Abominations.* Chap. xvi. 63. *That thou mayeſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more, becauſe of thy Shame; when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou haſt done, ſaith the Lord.* Job xlii. 6. *I abhor myſelf, and repent in Duſt and Aſhes.*

As we would therefore make the Holy Scriptures our Rule, in judging of the Nature of true Religion, and judging of our own religious Qualifications and State; it concerns us greatly to look at this Humiliation, as one of the moſt eſſential Things pertaining to true Chriſtianity.* This the principal Part of the Chriſtian Duty

* *Calvin* in his Inſtitutions, Book II. Chap. 2. § 11. ſays, "I "was always exceedingly pleaſed with that ſaying of *Chryſoſtom*, "The

Duty of *Self-denial.* That Duty consists in two Things, *viz. First*, In a Man's denying his worldly Inclinations, and in forsaking and renouncing all worldly Objects and Enjoyments; and *Secondly*, In denying his natural Self-exaltation, and renouncing his own Dignity and Glory, and in being emptied of himself; so that he does freely, and from his very Heart, as it were renounce himself, and annihilate himself. Thus the Christian doth, in evangelical Humiliation. And this Latter is the greatest and most difficult Part of Self-denial: Although they always go together, and one never truly is, where the other is not; yet natural Men can come much nearer to the former than the latter. Many *Anchorites* and *Recluses* have abandon'd (tho' without any true Mortification) the Wealth and Pleasures, and common Enjoyments of the World, who were far from renouncing their own Dignity and Righteousness; they never denied themselves for Christ, but only sold one Lust to feed another, sold a beastly Lust to pamper a devilish One; and so were never the better; but their latter End was worse than their Beginning; they turn'd out one black Devil, to let in seven white ones, that were worse than the first, tho' of a fairer Countenance. 'Tis inexpressible, and almost inconceivable, how strong a self-righteous, self-exalting Disposition is naturally in Man; and what he will not do and suffer, to feed and gratify it; and what Lengths have been gone in a seeming Self-denial in other Respects, by *Essenes* and *Pharisees* among the *Jews*, and by *Papists*, many Sects of Hereticks, and Enthusiasts, among professing Christians; and by many *Mahometans* and by *Pythagorean* Philosophers, and others, among

"The Foundation of our Philosophy is Humility," and yet more "pleased with that of *Augustine*, "As, says he, the Rhotorician, "being asked, what was the first Thing in the Rules of Eloquence, "he answered, Pronunciation; what was the second, Pronunciation; "what was the third, still he answered, Pronunciation. So if you "should ask me concerning the Precepts of the christian Religion, I "would answer, firstly, secondly, and thirdly, and forever, Humi-"lity."

among the Heathen: And all to do Sacrifice to this *Moloch* of ſpiritual Pride or Self-righteouſneſs; and that they may have ſomething wherein to exalt themſelves before God, and above their Fellow-creatures.

That Humiliation which has been ſpoken of, is what all the moſt glorious Hypocrites, who make the moſt ſplendid Shew of Mortification to the World, and high religious Affection, do groſly fail in. Were it not that this is ſo much inſiſted on in Scripture, as a moſt eſſential Thing in true Grace; one would be tempted to think that many of the Heathen Philoſophers were truly gracious, in whom was ſo bright an Appearance of many Vertues, and alſo great Illuminations, and inward Fervours and Elevations of Mind, as though they were truly the Subjects of divine Illapſes and heavenly Communications.*

'Tis true that many Hypocrites make great Pretences to Humility, as well as other Graces; and very often there

* Albeit the *Pythagoreans* were thus for *Judaic* myſterious "Wiſ-
"dom, and many moral, as well as natural Accompliſhments; yet
"were they not exempted from Boaſting and Pride. Which was
"indeed a Vice moſt epidemick, and as it were congenial, among
"all the Philoſophers; but in a more particular Manner, among
"the *Pythagoreans*. So *Hornius* Hiſt. Philoſoph. L. 3. Chap. 11.
"*The Manners of the* Pythagoreans *were not free from Boaſting.*
"*They were all* ΠΕΡΙΑΥΤΟΛΟΓΟΙ *ſuch as abounded in the Senſe*
"*and Commendation of their own Excellencies, and boaſting even almoſt*
"*to the Degree of Immodeſty and Impudence, as great* Heinſius ad
"Horat. *has rightly obſerved.*' Thus indeed does proud Nature
"delight to walk in the Sparks of its own Fire. And altho' many
"of theſe old Philoſophers could, by the Strength of their own
"Lights and Heats, together with ſome common Elevations and
"Raiſures of Spirit, (peradventure from a more than ordinary, tho'
"not ſpecial and ſaving Aſſiſtance of the Spirit) abandon many
"groſſer Vices; yet they were all deeply immerſed in that miſerable
"curſed Abyſs of ſpiritual Pride: ſo that all their natural and moral
"and philoſophic Attainments, did feed, nouriſh, ſtrengthen, and
"render moſt inveterate, this Hell-bred Peſt of their Hearts. Yea
"thoſe of them that ſeem'd moſt modeſt, as the *Academicks*, who
"profeſs'd they knew nothing, and the *Cynicks*, who greatly de-
"cried, both in Words and Habits, the Pride of others, yet even
"they abounded in the moſt notorious and viſible Pride. So con-
"natural

there is nothing whatsoever which they make a higher Profession of. They endeavour to make a great Shew of Humility in Speech and Behaviour; but they commonly make bungling Work of it; tho' glorious Work in their own Eyes. They can't find out what a humble Speech and Behaviour is, or how to speak and act so that there may indeed be a Savour of christian Humility in what they say and do: That sweet humble Air and Mien is beyond their Art, being not *led by the Spirit*, or naturally guided to a Behaviour becoming holy Humility: by the Vigour of a lowly Spirit within them. And therefore they have no other Way, many of them, but only to be much in declaring that they be humble, and telling how they were humbled to the Dust at such and such Times, and abounding in very bad Expressions which they use about themselves; such as, *I am the least of all Saints, I am a poor vile Creature, I am not worthy of the least Mercy, or that God should look upon me! Oh, I have a dreadful wicked Heart! My Heart is worse than the Devil! Oh, this cursed Heart of mine*, &c. Such Expressions are very often used, not with a Heart that is broken, not with spiritual Mourning, not with the Tears of her that washed Jesus's Feet with her Tears, not as *remembring and being confounded, and never opening their Mouth more, because of their Shame, when God is pacified*, as the Expression is, Ezek. xvi. 63. But with a light Air, with Smiles in the Countenance, or with a pharisaical Affectation: And we must believe that they are thus humble, and see themselves so vile, upon the Credit of their *Say so*; for there is nothing appears in them of any Savour of Humility, in the Manner of their Deportment and Deeds that they do. There are many that are full of Expressions of their own Vileness, who

" natural and morally essential to corrupt Nature, is this envenom'd " Root, Fountain and Plague of spiritual Pride: Especially where " there is any natural, moral or philosophic Excellence to feed the " same. Whence *Austin* rightly judged all these philosophic Ver- " tues, to be but splended Sins." *Gale* Court of the Gentiles, Part II. B. II. Chap. 10. § 17.

who yet expect to be looked upon as eminent and bright Saints by others, as their Due; and 'tis dangerous for any so much as to hint the Contrary, or to carry it towards them any otherwise, than as if we looked upon them some of the Chief of Christians. There are many that are much in crying out of their wicked Hearts, and their great Short-comings, and Unprofitableness, and speaking as tho' they looked on themselves as the Meanest of the Saints; who yet, if a Minister should seriously tell them the same Things in private, and should signify, that he feared they were very low and weak Christians, and thought they had Reason solemnly to consider of their great Barrenness and Unprofitableness, and falling so much short of many others; it would be more than they could digest; they would think themselves highly injured; and there would be Danger of a rooted Prejudice in them against such a Minister.

There are some that are abundant in talking against *legal Doctrines*, *legal Preaching*, and *legal Spirit*, who do but little understand the Thing they talk against. A *legal Spirit*, is a more subtil Thing than they imagine, it is too subtil for them. It lurks and operates, and prevails in their Hearts, and they are most notoriously guilty of it, at the same Time, when they are inveighing against it. So far as a Man is not emptied of himself, and of his own Righteousness and Goodness, in whatever Form or Shape, so far he is of a *legal Spirit*. A Spirit of Pride of a Man's own Righteousness, Morality, Holiness, Affection, Experience, Faith, Humiliation, or any Goodness whatsoever, is a legal Spirit. It was no Pride in *Adam* before the Fall, to be of a legal Spirit: Because of his Circumstances, he might seek Acceptance by his own Righteousness. But a legal Spirit in a fallen sinful Creature, can be nothing else but spiritual Pride; and reciprocally, a spiritually proud Spirit is a legal Spirit. There is no Man living that is lifted up with a Conceit of his own Experiences and Discoveries,

Diſcoveries, and upon the Account of them gliſters in his own Eyes, but what truſts in his Experiences, and makes a Righteouſneſs of them; however he may uſe humble Terms, and ſpeak of his Experiences as of the *great Things God has done for him*, and it may be calls upon others to glorify God for them; yet he that is proud of his Experiences, arrogates ſomething to himſelf, as tho' his Experiences were ſome Dignity of his. And if he looks on them as his own Dignity, he neceſſarily thinks that God looks on them ſo too; for he neceſſarily thinks his own Opinion of them to be true; and conſequently judges that God looks on them as he does; and ſo unavoidably imagines that God looks on his Experiences as a Dignity in him, as he looks on them himſelf; and that he gliſters as much in God's Eyes, as he does in his own. And thus he truſts in what is inherent in him, to make him ſhine in God's Sight, and recommend him to God: and with this Encouragement he goes before God in Prayer; and this makes him expect much from God; and this makes him think that Chriſt loves him, and that he is willing to cloath him with his Righteouſneſs; becauſe he ſuppoſes, that he is taken with his Experiences and Graces: And this is a high Degree of living on his own Righteouſneſs; and ſuch Perſons are in the high Road to Hell. Poor deluded Wretches, who think they look ſo gliſtering in God's Eyes, when they are a Smoke in his Noſe, and are many of them more odious to him, than the moſt impure Beaſt in *Sodom*, that makes no Pretence to Religion! To do as theſe do, is to *live upon Experiences*, according to the true Notion of it; and not to do as thoſe, who only make Uſe of ſpiritual Experiences, as Evidences of a State of Grace, and in that Way receive Hope and Comfort from 'em.

There is a Sort of Men, who indeed abundantly cry down Works, and cry up Faith in Oppoſition to Works, and ſet up themſelves very much as evangelical Perſons, in Oppoſition to thoſe that are of a legal Spirit, and make a fair Shew of advancing Chriſt and the Goſpel,

and

and the Way of free Grace, who are indeed some of the greatest Enemies to the Gospel Way of free Grace, and the most dangerous Opposers of pure humble Christianity.*

There is a pretended great Humiliation, and being dead to the Law, and emptied of Self, which is one of the biggest and most elated Things in the World. Some there are, who have made great Profession of Experience of a thorough Work of the Law on their own Hearts, and of being brought fully off from Works; whose Conversation has savoured most of a Self-righteous Spirit, of any that ever I had Opportunity to observe. And some who think themselves quite emptied of themselves, and are confident that they are abased in the Dust, are full as they can hold with the Glory of their own Humility, and lifted up to Heaven with an high Opinion of their Abasement. Their Humility, is a swelling self-conceited, confident, showy, noisy, assuming Humility. It seems to be the Nature of

* "Take not every Opinion and Doctrine from Men or Angels, "that bear a fair Shew of advancing Christ; for they may be but "the Fruits of evangelical Hypocrisy and Deceit; that being de- "ceived themselves, may deceive others too; Matth. vii. 15. *Be- "ware of them that come in Sheep's Cloathing*; in the Innocency, "Purity, and Meekness of Christ and his People, *but inwardly are "Wolves*, proud, cruel, censorious, *speaking Evil of what they "know not. By their Fruits you shall know them.* Do not think, "beloved, that Satan will not seek to send Delusions among us. "And do you think these Delusions will come out of the popish "Pack, whose Inventions smell above Ground here? No, he must "come, and will come with more evangelical, fine-spun Devices. "It's a Rule observed among *Jesuits*, at this Day, if they would "conquer Religion by Subtility, never oppose Religion with a cross "Religion; but set it against itself: So oppose the Gospel by the "Gospel. And look, as Churches pleading for Works, had new "invented devised Works; so when Faith is preached, Men will "have their new Inventions of Faith. I speak not this against the "Doctrine of Faith, where it is preached; but am glad of it: Nor "that I would have Men content themselves with every Form of "Faith; for I believe that most Men's Faith needs confirming or "trying. But I speak to prevent Danger on that Hand." *Shepard's* Parable. Part I. Pa. 122.

of ſpiritual Pride to make Men conceited and oſtentatious of their Humility. This appears in that firſt-born of Pride, among the Children of Men, that would be called *his Holineſs*, even the Man of Sin, that exalts himſelf above all that is called God, or is worſhipped; he ſtyles himſelf *Servant of Servants*; and to make a Shew of Humility, waſhes the Feet of a Number of poor Men at his Inauguration.

For Perſons to be truly emptied of themſelves, and to be poor in Spirit, and broken in Heart, is quite another Thing, and has other Effects, than many imagine. 'Tis aſtoniſhing how greatly many are deceived about themſelves as to this Matter, imagining themſelves moſt humble, when they are moſt proud, and their Behaviour is really the moſt haughty. The Deceitfulneſs of the Heart of Man appears in no one Thing ſo much, as this of ſpiritual Pride and Self-righteouſneſs. The Subtilty of Satan appears in its Height in his managing of Perſons with Reſpect to this Sin. And perhaps one Reaſon may be, that here he has moſt Experience: He knows the Way of its coming in; he is acquainted with the ſecret Springs of it; it was his own Sin.—Experience gives vaſt Advantage in leading Souls, either in Good or Evil.

But tho' ſpiritual Pride be ſo ſubtil and ſecret an Iniquity, and commonly appears under a Pretext of great Humility; yet there are two Things by which it may (perhaps univerſally and ſurely) be diſcovered and diſtinguiſhed.

The *firſt* Thing is this; He that is under the Prevalence of this Diſtemper, is apt to think highly of his Attainments in Religion, as comparing himſelf with others. 'Tis natural for him to fall into that Thought of himſelf, that he is an eminent Saint, that he is very high amongſt the Saints, and has diſtinguiſhingly good and great Experiences. That is the ſecret Language of his Heart, Luke xviii. 11. *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men.* And Iſai. lxv. 5. *I am holier*

than

than thou. Hence such are apt to put themselves forward among God's People, and as it were to take a high Seat among them, as if there was no doubt of it but it belonged to them. They, as it were, naturally do that which Christ condemns, Luke xiv. 7, &c. *take the highest Room.* This they do, by being forward to take upon them the Place and Business of the Chief; to guide, teach, direct and manage; *They are confident that they are Guides to the Blind, a Light of them which are in Darkness, Instructors of the Foolish, Teachers of Babes,* Rom. ii. 19, 20. 'Tis natural for them to take it for granted, that it belongs to them to do the Part of Dictators and Masters in Matters of Religion; and so they implicitly affect to be called of Men *Rabbi,* which is by Interpretation *Master,* as the *Pharisees* did, Matth. xxiii. 6, 7, i. e. They are apt to expect that others should regard them, and yield to them, as Masters, in Matters of Religion.*

But he whose Heart is under the Power of christian Humility, is of a contrary Disposition. If the Scriptures are at all to be relied on, such an one is apt to think his Attainments in Religion to be comparatively mean, and to esteem himself low among the Saints, and one of the least of Saints. Humility, or true Lowliness of Mind, disposes Persons to think others better than themselves; Phil. ii. 3. *In Lowliness of Mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.* Hence they are apt to think the lowest Room belongs to them; and their inward Disposition naturally leads them to obey that Precept of our Saviour, *Luke* xiv. 10. 'Tis not natural to them to take it upon them to do the Part of Teachers; but on the contrary, they are disposed to think

* "There be two Things wherein it appears that a Man has only "common Gifts, and no inward Principle; 1. These Gifts ever "puff up, and make a Man something in his own Eyes, as the "*Corinthian* Knowledge did; and many a private Man thinks him-"self fit to be a Minister." *Shepard's* Parable, Part I. Pa. 181, 182.

think that they are not the Persons, that others are fitter for it than they; as it was with *Moses* and *Jeremiah*, (Exod. iii. 11. Jer. i. 6.) tho' they were such eminent Saints, and of great Knowledge. It is not natural to them to think that it belongs to them to teach, but to be taught: They are much more eager to hear, and to receive Instruction from others, than to dictate to others; Jam. i. 19. *Be ye swift to hear, slow to speak.* And when they do speak, 'tis not natural to them to speak with a bold, masterly Air; but Humility disposes them rather to speak trembling. Hosea xiii. 1. *When* Ephraim *spake trembling, he exalted himself in* Israel; *but when he offended in* Baal, *he died.* They are not apt to assume Authority, and to take upon them to be chief Managers and Masters; but rather to be subject to others; Jam. iii. 1, 2, *Be not many Masters.* 1 Pet. v. 5. *All of you be subject one to another, and be cloathed with Humility.* Eph. v. 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another, in the Fear of God.*

There are some Person's Experiences that naturally work that Way, to make them think highly of their Experiences; and they do often themselves speak of their Experiences as very great and extraordinary; they freely speak of the *great Things they have met with.* This may be spoken, and meant in a good Sense. In one Sense, every Degree of saving Mercy is a *great Thing:* It is indeed a Thing *great*, yea, *infinitely great*, for God to bestow the least Crumb of Children's Bread on such Dogs as we are in ourselves; and the more humble a Person is that hopes that God has bestowed such Mercy on him, the more apt will he be to call it a *great Thing that he has met with*, in this Sense. But if by *great Things which they have experienced*, they mean comparatively great spiritual Experiences, or great compared with others Experiences, or beyond what is ordinary, which is evidently oftentimes the Case; then for a Person to say, *I have met with great Things*, is the very same Thing as to say, *I am an eminent Saint*, and have more

Grace

Grace than ordinary; for to have great Experiences, if the Experiences be true and worth the telling of, is the ſame Thing as to have great Grace: there is no true Experience but the Exerciſe of Grace; and exactly according to the Degree of true Experience, is the Degree of Grace and Holineſs. The Perſons that talk thus about their Experiences, when they give an Account of them, expect that others ſhould admire them. Indeed they don't call it Boaſting to talk after this Manner about their Experiences, nor do they look upon it as any Sign of Pride; becauſe they ſay, *they know that it was not they that did it, it was free Grace, they are the great Things that God has done for them, they would acknowledge the great Mercy God has ſhown them, and not make light of it.* But ſo it was with the *Phariſee* that Chriſt tells us of, *Luke* xviii. He in Words gave God the Glory of making him to differ from other Men; *God I thank thee*, ſays he, *that I am not as other Men.** Their verbally aſcribing it to the Grace of God, that they are holier than other Saints, don't hinder their Forwardneſs to think ſo highly of their Holineſs, being a ſure Evidence of the Pride and Vanity of their Minds. If they were under the Influence of an humble Spirit, their Attainments in Religion, would not be ſo apt to ſhine in their own Eyes, nor would they be ſo much in admiring their own Beauty. The Chriſtians that are really the moſt eminent Saints, and therefore have the moſt excellent Experiences, *and are greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven, humble themſelves as a little Child*, Matth. xviii. 4. Becauſe they look on themſelves as but little Children in Grace, and their Attainments to be but the Attainments of Babes in Chriſt, and are aſtoniſhed at, and aſhamed of the low Degrees of their Love, and their

* *Calvin*, in his Inſtitutions, B. 3, Chap. 12. § 7, ſpeaking of this Phariſee, obſerves, "That in his outward Confeſſion he acknowledges that the Righteouſneſs that he has is the Gift of God: But (ſays he) becauſe he truſts *that he is righteous*, he goes away out of the Preſence of God, unacceptable and odious."

their Thankfulneſs, and their little Knowledge of God. *Moſes* when he had been converſing with God in the Mount, and his Face ſhone ſo bright in the Eyes of others, as to dazzle their Eyes, *wiſt not that his Face ſhone.* There are ſome Perſons that go by the Name of high Profeſſors, and ſome will own themſelves to be high Profeſſors; but eminently humble Saints, that will ſhine brighteſt in Heaven, are not at all apt to profeſs high. I don't believe there is an eminent Saint in the World that is a high Profeſſor. Such will be much more likely to profeſs themſelves to be the leaſt of all Saints, and to think that every Saint's Attainments and Experiences are higher than his.*

Such is the Nature of Grace, and of true ſpiritual Light, that they naturally diſpoſe the Saints in the preſent State, to look upon their Grace and Goodneſs little, and their Deformity great. And they that have the moſt Grace and ſpiritual Light, of any in this World, have moſt of this Diſpoſition. As will appear moſt clear and evident to any one that ſoberly and thoroughly weighs the Nature and Reaſon of Things, and conſiders the Things following. *That*

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* *Luther*, as his Words are cited by *Rutherford*, in his *Diſplay of the ſpiritual Antichriſt*, Pa. 143, 144, ſays thus, "So is the Life "of a Chriſtian, that he that has begun, ſeems to himſelf to have "nothing; but ſtrives and preſſes forward, that he may apprehend. "Whence *Paul* ſays, *I count not myſelf to have apprehended.* For "indeed nothing is more pernicious to a Believer, than that Pre- "ſumption, that he has already apprehended, and has no farther "Need of ſeeking. Hence alſo many fall back, and pine away in "ſpiritual Security and Slothfulneſs. So *Bernard* ſays, *To ſtand "ſtill in God's Way, is to go back.* Wherefore this remains to him "that has begun to be a Chriſtian, to think that he is not yet a "Chriſtian, but to ſeek that he may be a Chriſtian, that he may "glory with *Paul*, *I am not, but deſire to be*; a Chriſtian not yet "finiſhed, but only in his Beginnings. Therefore he is not a "Chriſtian, that is a Chriſtian; that is, He that thinks himſelf a "finiſhed Chriſtian, and is not ſenſible how he falls ſhort. We "reach after Heaven, but are not in Heaven. Woe to him that is "wholly renewed, that is, that thinks himſelf to be ſo. That Man, "without Doubt, has never ſo much as begun to be renewed, nor "did he ever taſte what it is to be a Chriſtian."

That Grace and Holineſs is worthy to be called little, that is, little in Compariſon of what it ought to be. And ſo it ſeems to one that is truly gracious: For ſuch an one has his Eye upon the Rule of his Duty; a Conformity to that is what he aims at; it is what his Soul ſtruggles and reaches after; and it is by that that he eſtimates and judges of what he does, and what he has. To a gracious Soul, and eſpecially to one eminently gracious, *that* Holineſs appears little, which is little of what it ſhould be; little of what he ſees infinite Reaſon for, and Obligation to. If his Holineſs appears to him to be at a vaſt Diſtance from this, it naturally appears deſpicable in his own Eyes, and not worthy to be mentioned as any Beauty or Amiableneſs in him. For the like Reaſon as a hungry Man naturally accounts that which is ſet before him, but a little Food, a ſmall Matter, not worth mentioning, that is nothing in Compariſon of his Appetite. Or, as the Child of a great Prince, that is jealous for the Honour of his Father, and beholds the Reſpect which Men ſhew him, naturally looks on that Honour and Reſpect very little, and not worthy to be regarded, which is nothing in Compariſon of that which the Dignity of his Father requires.

But that is the Nature of true Grace and ſpiritual Light, that it opens to a Perſon's View the infinite Reaſon there is that he ſhould be holy in a high Degree. And the more Grace he has, the more this is open'd to View, the greater Senſe he has of the infinite Excellency and Glory of the divine Being, and of the infinite Dignity of the Perſon of Chriſt, and the boundleſs Length and Breadth, and Depth and Height, of the Love of Chriſt to Sinners. And as Grace increaſes, the Fields opens more and more to a diſtant View, 'till the Soul is ſwallowed up with the Vaſtneſs of the Object, and the Perſon is aſtoniſhed to think how much it becomes him to love this God, and this glorious Redeemer, that has ſo loved Man, and how little he does love. And ſo the more he apprehends, the more the Smallneſs of his

Grace

Grace and Love appears ſtrange and wonderful: And therefore is more ready to think that others are beyond him. For wondering at the Littleneſs of his own Grace, he can ſcarcely believe that ſo ſtrange a Thing happens to other Saints: 'Tis amazing to him, that one that is really a Child of God, and that has actually received the ſaving Benefits of that unſpeakable Love of Chriſt, ſhould love no more: And he is apt to look upon it as a Thing peculiar to himſelf, a ſtrange and exempt Inſtance; for he ſees only the outſide of other Chriſtians, but he ſees his own inſide.

Here the Reader may poſſibly object, that Love to God is really increaſed, in Proportion as the Knowledge of God is increaſed; and therefore how ſhould an Increaſe of Knowledge in a Saint, make his Love appear leſs, in Compariſon of what is known? To which I anſwer, that although Grace and the Love of God in the Saints, be anſwerable to the Degree of Knowledge or Sight of God; yet it is not in Proportion to the Object ſeen and known. The Soul of a Saint, by having ſomething of God open'd to Sight, is convinced of much more than is ſeen. There is ſomething that is ſeen, that is wonderful; and that Sight brings with it a ſtrong Conviction of ſomething vaſtly beyond, that is not immediately ſeen. So that the Soul, at the ſame Time, is aſtoniſhed at its Ignorance, and that it knows ſo little, as well as that it loves ſo little. And as the Soul, in a ſpiritual View, is convinced of infinitely more in the Object, yet beyond Sight; ſo it is convinced of the Capacity of the Soul, of knowing vaſtly more, if Clouds and Darkneſs were but removed. Which cauſes the Soul, in the Enjoyment of a ſpiritual View, to complain greatly of ſpiritual Ignorance, and Want of Love, and long and reach after more Knowledge, and more Love.

Grace and the Love of God in the moſt eminent Saints in this World, is truly very little in Compariſon of what it ought to be. Becauſe the higheſt Love,

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that ever any attain to in this Life, is poor, cold, exceeding low, and not worthy to be named in Compariſon of what our Obligations appear to be, from the joint Conſideration of theſe two Things; *viz.* 1. The Reaſon God has given us to love him, in the Manifeſtations he has made of his infinite Glory, in his Word, and in his Works; and particularly in the Goſpel of his Son, and what he has done for ſinful Man by him. And 2. The Capacity there is in the Soul of Man, by thoſe intellectual Faculties which God has given it, of ſeeing and underſtanding theſe Reaſons, which God has given us to love him, How ſmall indeed is the Love of the moſt eminent Saint on Earth, in Compariſon of what theſe Things jointly conſidered do require! And this Grace tends to convince Men of; and eſpecially eminent Grace: For Grace is of the Nature of Light, and brings Truth to View. And therefore, he that has much Grace, apprehends much more than others, that great Height to which his Love ought to aſcend; and he ſees better than others, how little a Way he has riſen towards that Height. And therefore, eſtimating his Love by the whole Height of his Duty, hence it appears aſtoniſhingly little and low in his Eyes.

And the eminent Saint, having ſuch a Conviction of the high Degree in which he ought to love God, this ſhews him, not only the Littleneſs of his Grace, but the Greatneſs of his remaining Corruption. In order to judge how much Corruption or Sin we have remaining in us, we muſt take our Meaſure from that Height to which the Rule of our Duty extends: The whole of the Diſtance we are at from that Height, is Sin: For failing of Duty is Sin; otherwiſe our Duty is not our Duty; and by how much the more we fall ſhort of our Duty, ſo much the more Sin have we. Sin is no other than Diſagreeableneſs, in a moral Agent, to the Law or Rule of his Duty. And therefore the Degree of Sin, is to be judged of by the Rule: So much Diſagreeableneſs to the Rule, ſo much Sin, whether it be

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in *Defect or Exceſs.* Therefore if Men, in their Love to God, don't come up half Way to that Height which Duty requires, then they have more Corruption in their Hearts than Grace; becauſe there is more Goodneſs wanting than is there; and all that is wanting is Sin: it is an abominable Defect; and appears ſo to the Saints, eſpecially thoſe that are eminent; it appears exceeding abominable to them, that Chriſt ſhould be loved ſo little, and thanked ſo little for his dying Love; it is in their Eyes hateful Ingratitude.

And then the Increaſe of Grace has a Tendency another Way, to cauſe the Saints to think their Deformity vaſtly more than their Goodneſs: It not only tends to convince them that their Corruption is much greater than their Goodneſs; which is indeed the Caſe: But it alſo tends to cauſe the Deformity that there is in the leaſt Sin, or the leaſt Degree of Corruption, to appear ſo great, as vaſtly to outweigh all the Beauty there is in their greateſt Holineſs: For this alſo is indeed the Caſe. For the leaſt Sin againſt an infinite God, has an infinite Hatefulneſs or Deformity in it; but the higheſt Degree of Holineſs in a Creature, has not an infinite Lovelineſs in it: And therefore the Lovelineſs of it is as nothing, in Compariſon of the Deformity of the leaſt Sin. That every Sin has infinite Deformity and Hatefulneſs in it, is moſt demonſtrably evident; becauſe what the Evil, or Iniquity, or Hatefulneſs of Sin conſiſts in, is the violating of an Obligation, or the being or doing contrary to what we ſhould be or do, or are obliged to. And therefore, by how much the greater the Obligation is that is violated, ſo much the greater is the Iniquity and Hatefulneſs of the Violation. But certainly our Obligation to love and honour any Being, is in ſome Proportion to his Lovelineſs and Honourableneſs, or to his Worthineſs to be loved and honoured by us; which is the ſame Thing. We are ſurely under greater Obligation to love a more lovely Being, than a leſs lovely: And if a Being be infinitely lovely or worthy

to be loved by us, then our Obligations to love him, are infinitely great: And therefore, whatever is contrary to this Love, has in it infinite Iniquity, Deformity and Unworthineſs. But on the other Hand, with Reſpect to our Holineſs or Love to God, there is not an infinite Worthineſs in that. The Sin of the Creature againſt God, is ill-deſerving and hateful in Proportion to the Diſtance there is between God and the Creature: The Greatneſs of the Object, and the Meanneſs and Inferiority of the Subject, aggravates it. But 'tis the Reverſe with Regard to the Worthineſs of the Reſpect of the Creature to God; 'tis *worthleſs*, and not worthy, in Proportion to the Meanneſs of the Subject. So much the greater the Diſtance between God and the Creature, ſo much the leſs is the Creature's Reſpect worthy of God's Notice or Regard. The great Degree of Superiority, increaſes the Obligation on the Inferior to regard the Superior; and ſo makes the Want of Regard more hateful: But the great Degree of Inferiority diminiſhes the Worth of the Regard of the Inferior; becauſe the more he is inferior, the leſs is he worthy of Notice; the leſs he is, the leſs is what he can offer worth; for he can offer no more than himſelf, in offering his beſt Reſpect; and therefore as he is little, and little worth, ſo is his Reſpect little worth. And the more a Perſon has of true Grace and ſpiritual Light, the more will it appear thus to him; the more will he appear to himſelf infinitely deformed by Reaſon of Sin, and the leſs will the Goodneſs that is in his Grace, or good Experience, appear in Proportion to it. For indeed it is nothing to it: It is leſs than a Drop to the Ocean: For finite bears no Proportion at all to that which is infinite. But the more a Perſon has of ſpiritual Light, the more do Things appear to him, in this Reſpect, as they are indeed. Hence it moſt demonſtrably appears, that true Grace is of that Nature, that the more a Perſon has of it, with remaining Corruption, the leſs does his Goodneſs and Holineſs appear, in Proportion to his Deformity;

mity; and not only to his paſt Deformity, but to his preſent Deformity, in the Sin that now appears in his Heart, and in the abominable Defects of his higheſt and beſt Affections, and brighteſt Experiences.

The Nature of many high religious Affections, and great Diſcoveries (as they are called) in many Perſons that I have been acquainted with, is to hide and cover over the Corruption of their Hearts, and to make it ſeem to them as if all their Sin was gone, and to leave them without Complaints of any hateful Evil left in them; (tho' it may be they cry out much of their paſt Unworthineſs) a ſure and certain Evidence that their Diſcoveries (as they call them) are Darkneſs and not Light. 'Tis Darkneſs that hides Men's Pollution and Deformity; but Light let into the Heart diſcovers it, ſearches it out in its ſecret Corners, and makes it plainly to appear; eſpecially that penetrating, all-ſearching Light of God's Holineſs and Glory. 'Tis true that ſaving Diſcoveries may for the preſent hide Corruption in one Senſe; they reſtrain the *poſitive Exerciſes* of it, ſuch as Malice, Envy, Covetouſneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Murmuring. *&c.* but they bring Corruption to Light, in that which is privative, *viz.* that there is no more Love, no more Humility, no more Thankfulneſs. Which Defects appear moſt hateful, in the Eyes of thoſe who have the moſt eminent Exerciſes of Grace; and are very burthenſome, and cauſe the Saints to cry out of their Leanneſs, and odious Pride and Ingratitude. And whatever poſitive Exerciſes of Corruption, at any Time ariſe, and mingle themſelves with eminent Actings of Grace, Grace will exceedingly magnify the View of them, and render their Appearance far more heinous and horrible.

The more eminent Saints are, and the more they have of the Light *of Heaven* in their Souls, the more do they appear to themſelves, as the moſt eminent Saints in this World do to the Saints and Angels *in Heaven.* How can we rationally ſuppoſe the moſt eminent Saints on Earth appear to them, if beheld any otherwiſe, than

covered over with the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and their Deformities ſwallowed up and hid in the Corruſcation of the Beams of his abundant Glory and Love? How can we ſuppoſe our moſt ardent Love and Praiſes appear to them, that do behold the Beauty and Glory of God without a Veil? How does our higheſt Thankfulneſs for the dying Love of Chriſt appear to them, who ſee Chriſt as he is, who know as they are known, and ſee the Glory of the Perſon of him that died, and the Wonders of his dying Love, without any Cloud or Darkneſs? And how do they look on the deepeſt Reverence and Humility, with which Worms of the Duſt on Earth approach that infinite Majeſty, which they behold? Do they appear great to them, or ſo much as worthy of the Name of Reverence and Humility, in thoſe that they ſee to be at ſuch an infinite Diſtance from that great and holy God, in whoſe glorious Preſence they are? The Reaſon why the higheſt Attainments of the Saints on Earth appear ſo mean to them, is becauſe they dwell in the Light of God's Glory, and ſee God as he is. And it is in this Reſpect with the Saints on Earth, as it is with the Saints in Heaven, in Proportion as they are more eminent in Grace.

I would not be underſtood that the Saints on Earth, have, in all Reſpects, the worſt Opinion of themſelves, when they have moſt of the Exerciſe of Grace. In many Reſpects 'tis otherwiſe. With Reſpect to the poſitive Exerciſes of Corruption, they may appear to themſelves freeſt and beſt when Grace is moſt in Exerciſe, and worſt when the Actings of Grace are loweſt. And when they compare themſelves with themſelves, at different Times, they may know, when Grace is in lively Exerciſe, that 'tis better with them than it was before (tho' before, in the Time of it, they did not ſee ſo much Badneſs as they ſee now) and when afterwards they ſink again in the Frame of their Minds, they may know that they ſink, and have a new Argument of their great remaining Corruption, and a *rational* Con-

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viction of a greater Vileneſs than they ſaw before; and may have more of a Senſe of Guilt, and a Kind of *legal* Senſe of their Sinfulneſs, by far, than when in the lively Exerciſe of Grace, But yet it is true, and demonſtrable from the forementioned Conſiderations, that the Children of God never have ſo much of a *ſenſible* and *ſpiritual* Conviction of their Deformity; and ſo great and quick and abaſing a Senſe of their preſent Vileneſs and Odiouſneſs, as when they are higheſt in the Exerciſe of true and pure Grace; and never are they ſo much diſpoſed to ſet themſelves low among Chriſtians as then, And thus *he that is greateſt in the Kingdom*, or moſt eminent in the Church of Chriſt, is the ſame *that humbles himſelf*, as the leaſt Infant among them; agreeable to that great Saying of Chriſt, *Matth.* xviii. 4.

A true Saint may know that he has ſome true Grace: And the more Grace there is, the more eaſily is it known; as was obſerved and proved before. But yet it does not follow, that an eminent Saint is eaſily ſenſible that he is an eminent Saint, when compared with others.—I will not deny, that it is poſſible, that he that has much Grace, and is an eminent Saint, may know it. But he won't be apt to know it: It won't be a Thing obvious to him: That he is better than others, and has higher Experiences and Attainments, is not a foremoſt Thought; nor is it that which, from Time to Time, readily offers itſelf: It is a Thing that is not in his Way, but lies far out of Sight: He muſt take Pains to convince himſelf of it: There will be need of a great Command of Reaſon, and a high Degree of Strictneſs and Care in arguing, to convince himſelf. And if he be rationally convinced, by a very ſtrict Conſideration of his own Experiences, compared with the great Appearances of low Degrees of Grace in ſome other Saints, it will hardly ſeem real to him, that he has more Grace than they: And he'll be apt to loſe the Conviction, that he has by Pains obtained: Nor will it ſeem at all natural

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to him to act upon that Supposition. And this may be laid down as an infallible Thing, *That the Person who is apt to think, that he, as compared with others, is a very eminent Saint, much distinguished in Christian Experience, in whom this is a first Thought, that rises of itself, and naturally offers itself; he is certainly mistaken; he is no eminent Saint; but under the great Prevailings of a proud and self-righteous Spirit.* And if this be habitual with the Man, and is statedly the prevailing Temper of his Mind, he is no Saint at all; he has not the least Degree of any true Christian Experience, so surely as the Word of God is true.

And that Sort of Experiences that appears to be of that Tendency, and is found from Time to Time to have that Effect, to elevate the Subject of them with a great Conceit of those Experiences, is certainly vain and delusive. Those supposed Discoveries that naturally blow up the Person with an Admiration of the Eminency of his Discoveries, and fill him with Conceit, that now he has seen, and knows more than most other Christians, have nothing of the Nature of true spiritual Light in them. All true spiritual Knowledge is of that Nature, that the more a Person has of it, the more is he sensible of his own Ignorance; as is evident by 1 Cor. viii. 2. *He that thinketh he knoweth any Thing, he knoweth nothing yet, as he ought to know.* *Agur*, when he had a great Discovery of God, and Sense of the wonderful Height of his Glory, and of his marvellous Works, and cries out of his Greatness and Incomprehensibleness; at the same Time, had the deepest Sense of his brutish Ignorance, and look'd upon himself the most ignorant of all the Saints; Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 4. *Surely I am more brutish than any Man, and have not the Understanding of a Man: I neither learned Wisdom, nor have the Knowledge of the Holy. Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended? Who hath gathered the Wind in his Fists? Who hath bound the Waters in a Garment? Who hath*

established

eſtabliſhed all the Ends of the Earth? What is his Name? *And what is his Son's Name?* If thou canſt tell.

For a Man to be highly conceited of his ſpiritual and divine Knowledge, is for him to be wiſe in his own Eyes, if any Thing is. And therefore it comes under thoſe Prohibitions, Prov. iii. 7. *Be not wiſe in thine own Eyes.* Rom. xii. 16. *Be not wiſe in your own Conceits.* And brings Men under that Wo, Iſai. v. 21. *Wo unto them that are wiſe in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own Sight.* Thoſe that are thus wiſe in their own Eyes, are ſome of the leaſt likely to get Good of any in the World. Experience ſhews the Truth of that, Prov. xxvi. 12. *Seeſt thou a Man wiſe in his own Conceit? There is more Hope of a Fool than of him.*

To this ſome may object, That the *Pſalmiſt*, when we muſt ſuppoſe that he was in a holy Frame, ſpeaks of his Knowledge as eminently great, and far greater than that of other Saints, Pſal. cxix. 99, 100. *I have more Underſtanding than all my Teachers: For thy Teſtimonies are my Meditation. I underſtand more than the Ancients: Becauſe I keep thy Precepts.*

To this I anſwer two Things:

Firſt, There is no Reſtraint to be laid upon the Spirit of God, as to what he ſhall reveal to a *Prophet*, for the Benefit of his Church, who is ſpeaking or writing under *immediate Inſpiration.* The Spirit of God may reveal to ſuch an one, and dictate to him, to declare to others, ſecret Things that otherwiſe would be hard, yea, impoſſible for him to find out. As he may reveal to him Myſteries, that otherwiſe would be above the Reach of his Reaſon; or Things in a diſtant Place, that he can't ſee; or future Events, that it would be impoſſible for him to know and declare, if they were not extraordinarily revealed to him. So the Spirit of God might reveal to *David* this diſtinguiſhing Benefit he had received, by converſing much with God's Teſtimonies; and uſe him as his Inſtrument to record it for the Benefit of others, to excite them to the like Duty,

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and to uſe the ſame Means to gain Knowledge. Nothing can be gathered concerning the natural Tendency of the *ordinary* gracious Influences of the Spirit of God, from that, that *David* declares of his diſtinguiſhing Knowledge under the *extraordinary* Influences of God's Spirit, immediately dictating to him the divine Mind by Inſpiration, and uſing *David* as his Inſtrument, to write what he pleaſed, for the Benefit of his Church; any more than we can reaſonable argue, that it is the natural Tendency of Grace to incline Men to curſe others; and wiſh the moſt dreadful Miſery to them that can be thought of, becauſe *David*, under Inſpiration, often curſes others, and prays that ſuch Miſery may come upon them.

Secondly, It is not certain that the Knowledge *David* here ſpeaks of, is ſpiritual Knowledge, wherein Holineſs does fundamentally conſiſt. But it may be that greater Revelation which God made to him, of the *Meſſiah*, and the Things of his future Kingdom, and the far more clear and extenſive Knowledge that he had of the Myſteries and Doctrines of the Goſpel, than others; as a Reward for his keeping God's Teſtimonies. In this, it is apparent by the Book of Pſalms, that *David* far exceeded all that had gone before him.

Secondly, Another Thing that is an infallible Sign of ſpiritual Pride, is Perſons being apt to think highly of their Humility. Falſe Experiences are commonly attended with a counterfeit Humility. And it is the very Nature of a counterfeit Humility, to be highly conceited of itſelf. Falſe religious Affections have generally that Tendency, eſpecially when raiſed to a great Height, to make Perſons think that their Humility is great, and accordingly to take much Notice of their great Attainments in this Reſpect, and admire them. But eminently gracious Affections (I ſcruple not to ſay it) are evermore of a contrary Tendency, and have univerſally

ſally a contrary Effect, in thoſe that have them. They indeed make them very ſenſible, what Reaſon there is that they ſhould be deeply humbled, and cauſe them earneſtly to thirſt and long after it; but they make their preſent Humility, or that which they have already attained to, to appear ſmall; and their remaining Pride great, and exceedingly abominable.

The Reaſon why a proud Perſon ſhould be apt to think his Humility great, and why a very humble Perſon ſhould think his Humility ſmall, may be eaſily ſeen, if it be conſidered, That it is natural for Perſons, in judging of the Degree of their own Humiliation, to take their Meaſure from that which they eſteem their proper Height, or the Dignity wherein they properly ſtand. That may be great Humiliation in one, that is no Humiliation at all in another: Becauſe the Degree of Honourableneſs or Conſiderableneſs, wherein each does properly ſtand, is very different. For ſome great Man, to ſtoop to looſe the Latchet of the Shoes of another great Man, his Equal, or to waſh his Feet, would be taken Notice of as an Act of Abaſement in him; and he being ſenſible of his own Dignity, would look upon it ſo himſelf. But if a poor Slave is ſeen ſtooping to unlooſe the Shoes of a great Prince, no Body will take any Notice of this, as any Act of Humiliation in him, or Token of any great Degree of Humility: Nor would the Slave himſelf, unleſs he be horribly proud, and ridiculouſly conceited of himſelf: And if after he had done it, he ſhould, in his Talk and Behaviour, ſhew that he thought his Abaſement great in it, and had his Mind much upon it, as an Evidence of his being very humble; would not every Body cry out upon him, "Who do you think yourſelf to be, "that you ſhould think this that you have done, ſuch "a deep Humiliation?" This would make it plain to a Demonſtration, that this Slave was ſwolen with a high Degree of Pride and Vanity of Mind, as much as if he declared in plain Terms, *I think myſelf to be*

ſome

some great one. And the Matter is no less plain and certain, when worthless, vile and loathsome Worms of the Dust, are apt to put such a Construction on their Acts of Abasement before God, and to think it a Token of great Humility in them, that they, under their Affections, can find themselves so willing to acknowledge themselves to be so, and so mean and unworthy, and to behave themselves as those that are so inferior. The very Reason why such outward Acts, and such inward Exercises, look like great Abasement in such an one, is because he has a high Conceit of himself. Whereas if he thought of himself more justly, these Things would appear nothing to him, and his Humility in them worthy of no Regard; but would rather be astonished at his Pride, that one so infinitely despicable and vile, is brought no lower before God.—When he says in his Heart, "This is a great Act of Humiliation: It is "certainly a Sign of great Humility in me, that I should "feel thus, and do so;" his Meaning is, "This is "great Humility for me, for such a one as I, that am "so considerable and worthy." He considers how low he is now brought, and compares this with the Height of Dignity, on which, he in his Heart thinks he properly stands; and the Distance appears very great, and he calls it all meer Humility, and as such admires it. Whereas, in him that is truly humble, and really sees his own Vileness and Loathsomness before God, the Distance appears the other Way. When he is brought lowest of all, it does not appear to him, that he is brought below his proper Station; but that he is not come to it: He appears to himself, yet vastly above it: He longs to get lower, that he may come to it; but appears at great Distance from it. And this Distance he calls Pride. And therefore his Pride appears great to him, and not his Humility. For altho' he is brought much lower than he used to be; yet it don't appear to him worthy of the Name of Humiliation, for him that is so infinitely mean and detestable, to come down to a Place, which

though

though it be lower than what he uſed to aſſume, is yet vaſtly higher than what is proper for him. As Men would harldly count it worthy of the Name of Humility, in a contemptible Slave, that formerly affected to be a Prince, to have his Spirit ſo far brought down, as to take the Place of a Nobleman; when this is ſtill ſo far above his proper Station.

All Men in the World, in judging of the Degree of their own and others Humility, as appearing in any Act of theirs, conſider two Things, *viz.* the real Degree of Dignity they ſtand in; and the Degree of Abaſement, and the Relation it bears to that real Dignity. Thus the complying with the ſame low Place, or low Act, may be an Evidence of great Humility in one, that evidences but little or no Humility in another. But truly humble Chriſtians have ſo mean an Opinion of their own real Dignity, that all their Self-abaſement, when conſidered with Relation to that, and compar'd with that, appears very ſmall to them. It don't ſeem to them to be any great Humility, or any Abaſement to be made much of, for ſuch poor, vile, abject Creatures as they, to lie at the Foot of God.

The Degree of Humility is to be judged of by the Degree of *Abaſement*, and the Degree of the *Cauſe for Abaſement:* But he that is truly and eminently humble, never thinks his Humility great, conſidering the Cauſe. The Cauſe why he ſhould be abaſed appears ſo great, and the Abaſement of the Frame of his Heart ſo greatly ſhort of it, that he takes much more Notice of his Pride than his Humility.

Every one that has been converſant with Souls under Convictions of Sin, knows that thoſe who are greatly convinced of Sin, are not apt to think themſelves greatly convinced. And the Reaſon is this: Men judge of the Degree of their own Convictions of Sin, by two Things jointly conſidered; *viz.* the Degree of Senſe which they have of Guilt and Pollution, and the Degree of Cauſe they have for ſuch a Senſe, in the Degree of

their

real Sinfulneſs. 'Tis really no Argument of any great Conviction of Sin, for ſome Men to think themſelves to be very ſinful, beyond moſt others in the World; becauſe they are ſo indeed, very plainly and notoriouſly. And therefore a far leſs Conviction of Sin may incline ſuch an one to think ſo than another: He muſt be very blind indeed not to be ſenſible of it. But he that is truly under great Convictions of Sin, naturally thinks this to be his Caſe. It appears to him, that the Cauſe he has to be ſenſible of Guilt and Pollution, is greater than others have; and therefore he aſcribes his Senſibleneſs of this, to the Greatneſs of his Sin, and not to the Greatneſs of his Senſibility. 'Tis natural for one under great Convictions to think himſelf one of the greateſt of Sinners in Reality, and alſo that it is ſo very plainly and evidently; for the greater his Convictions are, the more plain and evident it ſeems to be to him. And therefore it neceſſarily ſeems to him ſo plain and ſo eaſy to him to ſee it, that it may be ſeen without much Conviction. *That* Man is under great Convictions, whoſe Conviction is great in Proportion to his Sin. But no Man that is truly under great Convictions, thinks his Conviction great in Proportion to his Sin. For if he does, 'tis a certain Sign that he inwardly thinks his Sins ſmall. And if that be the Caſe, *that* is a certain Evidence that his Conviction is ſmall. And this, by the Way, is the main Reaſon, that Perſons, when under a Work of Humiliation, are not ſenſible of it, in the Time of it.

And as it is with Conviction of Sin, juſt ſo it is, by Parity of Reaſon, with Reſpect to Perſon's Conviction or Senſibleneſs of their own Meanneſs and Vileneſs, their own Blindneſs, their own Impotence, and all that low Senſe that a Chriſtian has of himſelf, in the Exerciſe of *evangelical Humiliation.* So that in a high Degree of this, the Saints are never diſpoſed to think their Senſibleneſs of their own Meanneſs, Filthineſs, Impotence, *&c.* to be great; becauſe it never appears great to them, conſidering the Cauſe.

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An eminent Saint is not apt to think himself eminent in any Thing; all his Graces and Experiences are ready to appear to him to be comparatively small; but especially his Humility. There is nothing that appertains to christian Experience, and true Piety, that is so much out of his Sight as his Humility. He is a thousand Times more quick-sighted to discern his Pride, than his Humility: *That* he easily discerns, and is apt to take much Notice of, but hardly discerns his Humility. On the contrary, the deluded Hypocrite, that is under the Power of spiritual Pride, is so blind to nothing as his Pride; and so quick-sighted to nothing, as the Shews of Humility that are in him.

The humble Christian is more apt to find Fault with his own Pride than with other Men's. He is apt to put the best Construction on other's Words and Behaviour, and to think that none are so proud as himself. But the proud Hypocrite is quick to discern the Mote in his Brother's Eye, in this Respect; while he sees nothing of the Beam in his own, He is very often much in crying out of other's Pride, finding Fault with other's Apparel and Way of Living; and is affected ten Times as much with his Neighbour's Ring or Ribband, as with all the Filthiness of his own Heart.

From the Disposition there is in Hypocrites to think highly of their Humility, it comes to pass that counterfeit Humility, is forward to put forth itself to View. Those that have it, are apt to be much in speaking of their Humiliations, and to set them forth in high Terms, and to make a great outward Shew of Humility, in affected Looks, Gestures or Manner of Speech, or Meanness of Apparel, or some affected Singularity. So it was of old with the false Prophets, *Zech.* xiii. 4. So it was with the hypocritical *Jews*, Isai. lvii. 5. And so Christ tells us it was with the *Pharisees*, Matth. vi. 16. But it is contrariwise with true Humility: They that have it, are not apt to display their Eloquence in setting of it forth, or to speak of the Degree of their

Abasement

Abaſement in ſtrong Terms.* It don't affect to ſhew itſelf in any ſingular outward Meanneſs of Apparel, or Way of Living; agreeable to what is implied in Matth. vi. 17. *But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thine Head, and waſh thy Face.* Col. ii. 23. *Which Things have indeed a Shew of Wiſdom, in Will-worſhip, and Humility, and neglecting the Body.* Nor is true Humility a noiſy Thing; it is not loud and boiſterous. The Scripture repreſents it as of a contrary Nature. *Ahab*, when he had a viſible Humility, a Reſemblance of true Humility, *went ſoftly*, 1 Kings xxi. 27. A Penitent, in the Exerciſe of true Humiliation, is repreſented as ſtill and ſilent, Lam. iii. 28. *He ſitteth alone, and keepeth Silence, becauſe he hath borne it upon him.* And Silence is mentioned as what attends Humility, Prov. xxx. 32. *If thou haſt done fooliſhly, in lifting up thyſelf, or if thou haſt thought Evil, lay thy Hand upon thy Mouth.*

Thus I have particularly and largely ſhewn the Nature of that true Humility that attends holy Affections, as it appears in its Tendency to cauſe Perſons to think meanly of their Attainments in Religion, as compared with the Attainments of others, and particularly, of their Attainments in Humility: And have ſhewn the contrary Tendency of ſpiritual Pride, to diſpoſe Perſons to think their Attainments in theſe Reſpects to be great.

I have inſiſted the longer on this Matter, becauſe I look upon it a Matter of great Importance, as it affords a certain Diſtinction between true and counterfeit Humility; and alſo as this Diſpoſition of Hypocrites to look on

* It is an Obſervation of Mr. *Jones*, in his excellent Treatiſe of the Canon of the New Teſtament, that the Evangeliſt *Mark*, who was the Companion of St. *Peter*, and is ſuppoſed to have written his Goſpel, under the Direction of that Apoſtle; when he mentions *Peter*'s Repentance after his denying his Maſter, he don't uſe ſuch ſtrong Terms to ſet it forth as the other Evangeliſts, He only uſes theſe Words, *When he thought thereon he wept*, Mark xv. 72. Whereas the other Evangeliſts ſay thus, *He went out and wept bitterly*, Matth. xxvi. 75. Luke xxii. 62.

on themſelves better than others, is what God has declared to be very hateful to him, *a Smoke in his Noſe, and a Fire that burneth all the Day*, Iſai. lxv. 5. 'Tis mentioned as an Inſtance of the Pride of the Inhabitants of that holy City (as it was called) *Jeruſalem*, that they eſteem'd themſelves far better than the People of *Sodom*, and ſo looked upon them worthy to be overlooked and diſregarded by them; Ezek. xvi. 56. *For thy Siſter* Sodom *was not mentioned by thy Mouth, in the Day of thy Pride.*

Let not the Reader lightly paſs over theſe Things in Application to himſelf. If you once have taken it in, that it is a bad Sign for a Perſon to be apt to think himſelf a better Saint than others, there will ariſe a blinding Prejudice in your own Favour; and there will probably be need of a great Strictneſs of Self-Examination, in order to determine whether it be ſo with you. If on the Propoſal of the Queſtion, you anſwer, *No, it ſeems to me, none are ſo bad as I.* Don't let the Matter paſs off ſo; but examine again, whether or no you don't think yourſelf better than others on this very Account, becauſe you imagine you think ſo meanly of yourſelf. Have not you an high Opinion of this Humility? And if you anſwer again, *No, I have not an high Opinion of my Humility: It ſeems to me I am as proud as the Devil:* Yet examine again, whether Self-conceit don't riſe up under this Cover; whether on this very Account, that you think yourſelf as proud as the Devil, you don't think yourſelf to be very humble.

From this Oppoſition that there is between the Nature of a true, and of a counterfeit Humility, as to the Eſteem that the Subjects of them have of themſelves, ariſes a manifold Contrariety of Temper and Behaviour.

A truly humble Perſon, having ſuch a mean Opinion of his Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, is *poor in Spirit.* For a Perſon to be poor in Spirit, is to be in his own Senſe and Apprehenſion poor, as to what is in him, and to be of an anſwerable Diſpoſition. Therefore a truly

humble

humble Person, especially one eminently humble, naturally behaves himself in many Respects as a poor Man. *The Poor useth Intreaties, but the Rich answereth roughly.* A poor Man is not disposed to quick and high Resentment when he is among the Rich: He is apt to yield to others, for he knows others are above him; he is not stiff and self-willed; he is patient with hard Fare; he expects no other than to be despised, and takes it patiently; he don't take it heinously that he is overlook'd, and but little regarded; he is prepar'd to be in low Place; he readily honours his Superiors; he takes Reproofs quietly; he readily honours others as above him; he easily yields to be taught, and don't claim much to his Understanding and Judgment; he is not over nice or humoursome, and has his Spirit subdued to hard Things; he is not assuming, nor apt to take much upon him, but 'tis natural for him to be subject to others. Thus it is with the humble Christian. Humility is (as the great *Mastricht* expresses it) *a Kind of holy Pusillanimity.*

A Man that is very poor is a Beggar; so is he that is poor in Spirit. This is a great Difference between those Affections that are gracious, and those that are false: Under the former, the Person continues still a poor Beggar at God's Gates, exceeding empty and needy; but the latter make Men appear to themselves rich, and encreased with Goods, and not very necessitous; they have a great Stock in their own Imagination for their Subsistance.*

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* "This Spirit ever keeps a Man poor and vile in his own Eyes, "and empty.—When the Man hath got some Knowledge, and can "discourse pretty well, and hath some Tastes of the heavenly Gift, "some sweet Illapses of Grace, and so his Conscience is pretty well "quieted: And if he hath got some Answer to his Prayers, and "hath sweet Affections, he grows full: And having Ease to his "Conscience, casts off Sense, and daily groaning under Sin. And "hence the Spirit of Prayer dies: He loses his Esteem of God's "Ordinances; feels not such Need of them; or gets no Good, "feels no Life or Power by them.—This is the woful Condition of "some:

A poor Man is modeſt in his Speech and Behaviour; ſo, and much more, and more certainly and univerſally, is one that is poor in Spirit; he is humble and modeſt in his Behaviour amongſt Men. 'Tis in vain for any to pretend that they are humble, and as little Children before God, when they are haughty, aſſuming and impudent in their Behaviour amongſt Men. The Apoſtle informs us, that the Deſign of the Goſpel is to cut off all Glorying, not only before God, but alſo before Men, *Rom.* iv. 1, 2. Some pretend to great Humiliation, that are very haughty, audacious and aſſuming in their external Appearance and Behaviour: But they ought to conſider thoſe Scriptures, Pſal. cxxxi. 1. *Lord my Heart is not haughty, nor my Eyes lofty; neither do I exerciſe myſelf in great Matters, or in Things too high for me,* Prov. vi. 16, 17. *Theſe ſix Things doth the Lord hate, yea, ſeven are an Abomination unto him; a proud Look,* &c.—Chap. xxi. 4. *An high Look, and a proud Heart, are Sin.* Pſal. xviii. 27. *Thou wilt bring down high Looks.* And Plalm ci. 5. *Him that hath an high Look, and a proud Heart, will I not ſuffer.* 1 Cor. xiii. 4. *Charity vaunteth not itſelf; doth not behave itſelf unſeemly.* There is a certain amiable Modeſty and Fear that belongs to a chriſtian Behaviour among Men, ariſing from Humility, that the Scripture often ſpeaks of; 1 Pet. iii. 16. *Be ready to give an Anſwer to every*

" ſome: But yet they know it not. But now he that is filled with " the Spirit, the Lord empties him: And the more, the longer he " lives. So that tho' others think he needs not much Grace; yet " he accounts himſelf the pooreſt." *Shepard*'s Parable of the ten Virgins, Part II. P. 132.

" After all Fillings, be ever empty, hungry and feeling Need, " and praying for more." *Ibid.* P. 151.

" Truly Brethren, when I ſee the Curſe of God upon many " Chriſtians, that are now grown full of their Parts, Gifts, Peace, " Comforts, Abilities, Duties, I ſtand adoring the Riches of the " Lord's Mercy, to a little Handful of poor Believers; not only in " making them empty, but in keeping them ſo all their Days." *Shepard*'s Sound Believer, the late Edition in *Boſton*, P. 158, 159.

every Man that asketh you,—with Meekness and Fear. Rom. xiii. 7. *Fear, to whom Fear.* 2 Cor. vii. 15. *Whilst he remembreth the Obedience of you all, how with Fear and Trembling ye received him.* Ephes. vi. 5. *Servants be obedient to them which are your Masters according to the Flesh, with Fear and Trembling.* 1 Pet. ii. 18. *Servants be subject to your Masters, with all Fear.* 1 Pet. iii. 2. *While they behold your chaste Conversation, coupled with Fear.* 1 Tim. ii. 9. *That Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with Shame-facedness and Sobriety.* In this Respect a Christian is like a little Child; a little Child is modest before Men, and his Heart is apt to be possessed with Fear and Awe amongst them.

The same Spirit will dispose a Christan to honour all Men. 1 Pet. ii. 17. *Honour all Men.* A humble Christian is not only disposed to honour the Saints in his Behaviour; but others also, in all those Ways that don't imply a visible Approbation of their Sins. Thus *Abraham*, the great Pattern of Believers, honoured the Children of *Heth*. Gen. xxiii. 11, 12. *Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the People of the Land.* This was a remarkable Instance of a humble Behaviour towards them that were out of Christ, and that *Abraham* knew to be accursed; and therefore would by no Means suffer his Servant to take a Wife to his Son, from among them; and *Esau*'s Wives, being of these Children of *Heth*, were a Grief of Mind to *Isaac* and *Rebecca*. So *Paul* honoured *Festus*, Acts xxvi. 25. *I am not mad, most noble Festus.* Not only will Christian Humility dispose Persons to honour those wicked Men that are out of the visible Church, but also false Brethren and Persecutors. As *Jacob*, when he was in an excellent Frame, having just been wrestling all Night with God, and received the Blessing, honoured *Esau*, his false and persecuting Brother; Gen. xxxiii. 14, 15. Jacob *bowed himself to the Ground seven Times, until he came near his Brother* Esau. So he called him *Lord*; and commanded all his Family to honour him in like Manner.

Thus

Thus I have endeavoured to deſcribe the Heart and Behaviour of one that is governed by a truly gracious Humility, as exactly agreeable to the Scriptures, as I am able.

Now it is out of ſuch a Heart as this, that all truly holy Affections do flow. Chriſtian Affections are like *Mary*'s precious Ointment, that ſhe poured on Chriſt's Head, that filled the whole Houſe with a ſweet Odour. *That* was poured out of an *Alabaſter-Box*; ſo gracious Affections flow out to Chriſt out of a *pure Heart*. That was poured out of a *broken Box*; 'till the Box was broken the Ointment could not flow, nor diffuſe its Odour: So gracious Affections flow out of a *broken Heart*. Gracious Affections are alſo like thoſe of *Mary Magdelene* (Luke vii. at the latter End) who alſo pours precious Ointment on Chriſt, out of an Alabaſter broken Box, anointing therewith the Feet of Jeſus, when ſhe had waſh'd them with her Tears, and wiped them with the Hair of her Head. All gracious Affections, that are a ſweet Odour to Chriſt, and that fill the Soul of a Chriſtian with an heavenly Sweetneſs and Fragrancy, are broken-hearted Affections. A truly Chriſtian Love, either to God or Men, is a humble broken-hearted Love. The Deſires of the Saints, however earneſt, are humble Deſires: Their Hope is an humble Hope; and their Joy, even when it is *unſpeakable, and full of Glory*, is a humble, broken-hearted Joy, and leaves the Chriſtian more poor in Spirit, and more like a little Child, and more diſpoſed to an univerſal Lowlineſs of Behaviour.

VII. Another Thing, wherein gracious Affections are diſtinguiſhed from others, is, that *they are attended with a Change of Nature.*

All gracious Affections do ariſe from a ſpiritual Underſtanding, in which the Soul has the Excellency and Glory of divine Things diſcovered to it, as was ſhewn before. But all ſpiritual Diſcoveries are transforming; and not only make an Alteration of the preſent Exer-

ciſe, Senſation and Frame of the Soul; but ſuch Power and Efficacy have they, that they make an Alteration in the very Nature of the Soul; 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all, with open Face, beholding as in a Glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* Such Power as this is properly divine Power, and is peculiar to *the Spirit of the Lord:* Other Power may make a great Alteration in Men's preſent Frames and Feelings; but 'tis the Power of a Creator only that can change the Nature, or give a new Nature. And no Diſcoveries or Illuminations, but thoſe that are divine and ſupernatural, will have this ſupernatural Effect. But this Effect all thoſe Diſcoveries have, that are truly divine. The Soul is deeply affected by theſe Diſcoveries, and ſo affected as to be transformed.

Thus it is with thoſe Affections that the Soul is the Subject of in its Converſion. The Scripture Repreſentations of Converſion do ſtrongly imply and ſignify a Change of Nature: ſuch as *being born again*; *becoming new Creatures*; *riſing from the Dead*; *being renewed in the Spirit of the Mind*; *dying to Sin and, and living to Righteouſneſs*; *putting off the old Man, and putting on the new Man*; *a being ingrafted into a new Stock*; *a having a divine Seed implanted in the Heart*; *a being made Partakers of the divine Nature*, &c.

Therefore if there be no great and remarkable, abiding Change in Perſons, that think they have experienced a Work of Converſion, vain are all their Imaginations and Pretences, however they have been affected.* Converſion (if we may give any Credit to the Scripture) is a great and univerſal Change of the Man, turning him from Sin to God. A Man may be reſtrained from Sin

* "I would not judge of the whole Soul's coming to Chriſt, ſo "much by ſudden Pangs, as by an inward Bent. For the whole "Soul, in affectionate Expreſſions and Actions, may be carried to "Chriſt; but being without this Bent, and Change of Affections "is unſound." *Shepard's* Parable, Part I. P. 203.

Sin, before he is converted; but when he is converted, he is not only reſtrained from Sin, his very Heart and Nature is turned from it, unto Holineſs: So that thenceforward he becomes a holy Perſon, and an Enemy to Sin. If therefore, after a Perſon's high Affections, at his ſuppoſed firſt Converſion, it comes to that in a little Time, that there is no very ſenſible, or remarkable Alteration in him, as to thoſe bad Qualities, and evil Habits, which before were viſible in him, and he is ordinarily under the Prevalence of the ſame Kind of Diſpoſitions that he uſed to be, and the ſame Things ſeem to belong to his Character, he appears as ſelfiſh, carnal, as ſtupid, and perverſe, as unchriſtian, and unſavoury as ever; it is greater Evidence againſt him, than the brighteſt Story of Experiences that ever was told, is for him. For in Chriſt Jeſus neither Circumciſion, nor Uncircumciſion, neither high Profeſſion, nor low Profeſſion, neither a fair Story, nor a broken one, avails any Thing; but a new Creature.

If there be a very great Alteration viſible in a Perſon for a while; if it be not abiding, but he afterwards returns, in a ſtated Manner to be much as he uſed to be; it appears to be no Change of Nature. For Nature is an abiding Thing. A Swine that is of a filthy Nature may be waſh'd; but the ſwiniſh Nature remains. And a Dove that is of a cleanly Nature may be defiled, but its cleanly Nature remains.*

Indeed Allowances muſt be made for the natural Temper: Converſion don't entirely root out the natural Temper: Thoſe Sins which a Man by his natural Conſtitution was moſt inclined to before his Converſion, he may

* "'Tis with the Soul, as with Water; all the Cold may be gone, "but the native Principle of Cold remains ſtill. You may remove "the burning of Luſts, not the Blackneſs of Nature. Where the "Power of Sin lies, Change of Conſcience from Security to Terror, "Change of Life from Prophaneneſs to Civility, and Faſhions of "the World, to eſcape the Pollutions thereof, Change of Luſts, nay "quenching them for a Time: But the Nature is never changed, in "the beſt Hypocrite that ever was." *Shepard's* Parable, Part I. P. 194.

may be moſt apt to fall into ſtill. But yet Converſion will make a great Alteration even with Reſpect to theſe Sins. Tho' Grace, while imperfect, don't root out an evil natural Temper; yet it is of great Power and Efficacy with Reſpect to it, to correct it. The Change that is wrought in Converſion, is an univerſal Change: Grace changes a Man with Reſpect to whatever is ſinful in him: The *old Man* is put off and the *new Man* put on: He is ſanctified throughout: And the Man becomes a new Creature; old Things are paſs'd away, and *all Things* are become new: All Sin is mortified: Conſtitution Sins, as well as others. If a Man before his Converſion, was by his natural Conſtitution, eſpecially inclined to Laſciviouſneſs, or Drunkenneſs, or Maliciouſneſs; converting Grace will make a great Alteration in him, with reſpect to theſe evil Diſpoſitions; ſo that however he may be ſtill moſt in Danger of theſe Sins, yet they ſhall no longer have Dominion over him; nor will they any more be properly his Character. Yea, true Repentance does in ſome Reſpects, eſpecially turn a Man againſt his own Iniquity; *that* wherein he has been moſt Guilty, and has chiefly diſhonoured God. He that forſakes other Sins, but ſaves his leading Sin, the Iniquity he is chiefly inclined to; is like *Saul*, when ſent againſt God's Enemies the *Amalekites*, with a ſtrict Charge to ſave none of them alive, but utterly to deſtroy them, ſmall and great; who utterly deſtroy'd inferior People, but ſaved the King, the chief of them all, alive.

Some fooliſhly make it an Argument in Favour of their Diſcoveries and Affections, that when they are gone, they are left wholly without any Life or Senſe, or any Thing beyond what they had before. They think it an Evidence that what they experienced was wholly of God, and not of themſelves; becauſe (ſay they) when God is departed, all is gone; they can ſee and feel nothing, and are no better than they uſed to be.

'Tis

'Tis very true that all Grace and Goodneſs in the Hearts of the Saints is entirely from God; and they are univerſally and immediately dependant on him for it. But yet theſe Perſons are miſtaken, as to the Manner of God's communicating himſelf and his holy Spirit, in imparting ſaving Grace to the Soul. He gives his Spirit to be united to the Faculties of the Soul, and to dwell there after the Manner of a Principle of Nature; ſo that the Soul, in being endued with Grace, is endued with a new Nature: But Nature is an abiding Thing. All the Exerciſes of Grace are entirely from Chriſt: But thoſe Exerciſes are not from Chriſt, as ſomething that is alive, moves and ſtirs ſomething that is without Life, and yet remains without Life; but as having Life communicated to it; ſo as through Chriſt's Power, to have inherent in itſelf, a vital Nature. In the Soul where Chriſt ſavingly *is*, there he *lives*. He don't only live *without* it, ſo as violently to actuate it; but he lives *in* it; ſo that that alſo is alive. Grace in the Soul is as much from Chriſt, as the Light in a Glaſs, held out in the Sun-beams, is from the Sun. But this repreſents the Manner of the Communication of Grace to the Soul, but in Part; becauſe the Glaſs remains as it was, the Nature of it not being at all chang'd, it is as much without any Lightſomneſs in its Nature as ever. But the Soul of a Saint receives Light from the Sun of Righteouſneſs, in ſuch a Manner, that its Nature is changed, and it becomes properly a luminous Thing: Not only does the Sun ſhine in the Saints, but they alſo become little Suns, partaking of the Nature of the Fountain of their Light. In this Reſpect, the Manner of their Derivation of Light, is like that of the Lamps in the Tabernacle, rather than that of a reflecting Glaſs; which tho' they were lit up by Fire from Heaven, yet thereby became, themſelves burning ſhining Things. The Saints don't only drink of the Water of Life, that flows from the original Fountain; but this Water becomes a Fountain of Water in them, ſpringing up

there

there, and flowing out of them; *John* iv. 14. and Chap. vii. 38, 39. Grace is compared to a Seed implanted, that not only is in the Ground, but has hold of it, has Root there, and grows there, and is an abiding Principle of Life and Nature there.

As it is with ſpiritual Diſcoveries and Affections given at firſt Converſion, ſo it is in all Illuminations and Affections of that Kind, that Perſons are the Subjects of afterwards; they are all *transforming*. There is a like divine Power and Energy in them, as in the firſt Diſcoveries: And they ſtill reach the Bottom of the Heart, and affect and alter the very Nature of the Soul, in Proportion to the Degree in which they are given. And a Transformation of Nature is continued and carried on by them, to the End of Life; 'till it is brought to Perfection in Glory. Hence the Progreſs of the Work of Grace in the Hearts of the Saints, is repreſented in Scripture, as a continued Converſion and Renovation of Nature. So the Apoſtle exhorts thoſe that were at *Rome*, *beloved of God*, *called to be Saints*, and that were the Subjects of God's redeeming *Mercies*, to be *tranſformed by the renewing of their Mind*; Rom. xii. 1, 2. *I beſeech you therefore by the Mercies of God, that ye preſent your Bodies, a living Sacrifice;---and be not conformed to this World; but be ye transformed, by the renewing of your Mind.* Compared with Chap. i. 7. So the Apoſtle writing to the *Saints and Faithful in Chriſt Jeſus*, that were at *Epheſus*, (Eph. i. 1.) and thoſe who *were once dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, but were now *quickened, and raiſed up, and made to ſit together in heavenly Places in Chriſt, and created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works, that were once far off, but were now made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt; and that were no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God, and that were built together for an Habitation of God through the Spirit*; I ſay, the Apoſtle writing to theſe, tells them, *that he ceaſed not to pray for them, that God would give them the Spirit of Wiſdom*

and

and Revelation, in the Knowledge of Chriſt; the Eyes of their Underſtanding being enlightened, that they might know or Experience, *what was the exceeding Greatneſs of God's Power towards them that believe; according to the Working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Chriſt, when he raiſed him from the Dead, and ſet him at his own Right Hand in the heavenly Places*, Eph. i. 16, to the End. In this the Apoſtle has Reſpect to the glorious Power and Work of God in converting and renewing the Soul: As is moſt plain by the Sequel. So the Apoſtle exhorts the ſame Perſons *to put off the old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Luſts; and be renewed in the Spirit of their Minds; and put on the new Man, which after God, is created in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs*, Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.

There is a Sort of high Affections that ſome have from Time to Time, that leave them without any Manner of Appearance of an abiding Effect. They go off ſuddenly; ſo that from the very Height of their Emotion, and ſeeming Rapture, they paſs at once to be quite dead, and void of all Senſe and Activity. It ſurely is not wont to be thus with high gracious Affections;* they leave a ſweet Savour and Reliſh of divine Things on the Heart, and a ſtronger Bent of Soul towards God and Holineſs. As *Moſes*'s Face not only ſhone while he was in the Mount, extraordinarily converſing with God; but it continued to ſhine after he came down from the Mount. When Men have been converſing with Chriſt in an extraordinary Manner, there is a ſenſible Effect of it remains upon them; there is ſomething remarkable in their Diſpoſition and Frame, which if we take Knowledge of, and trace to its Cauſe, we ſhall find it is becauſe they have been with Jeſus; *Acts* iv. 13.

VIII.

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* "Do you think the Holy Ghoſt comes on a Man, as on *Balaam*, "by immediate acting, and then leaves him; and then he has "nothing?" *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. P. 126.

VIII. Truly gracious Affections differ from thoſe Affections that are falſe and deluſive, in that they tend *to*, and are attended *with* the Lamb-like, Dove-like Spirit and Temper of Jeſus Chriſt; or in other Words, they naturally beget and promote ſuch a Spirit of Love, Meekneſs, Quietneſs, Forgiveneſs and Mercy, as appeared in Chriſt.

The Evidence of this in the Scripture, is very abundant. If we judge of the Nature of Chriſtianity, and the proper Spirit of the Goſpel, by the Word of God, this Spirit is what may by way of Eminency be called *the chriſtian Spirit*; and may be looked upon as the true, and diſtinguiſhing Diſpoſition of the Hearts of Chriſtians, as Chriſtians. When ſome of the Diſciples of Chriſt ſaid ſomething, through Inconſideration and Infirmity, that was not agreeable to ſuch a Spirit, Chriſt told them that 'they know not what Manner of Spirit they were of,' *Luke* ix. 55, implying that this Spirit that I am ſpeaking of, is the proper Spirit of his Religion and Kingdom. All that are truly Godly, and real Diſciples of Chriſt, have this Spirit in them; and not only ſo, but they *are of* this Spirit; it is the Spirit by which they are ſo poſſeſſed and governed, that it is their true and proper Character. This is evident by what the wiſe Man ſays, *Prov.* xvii. 27, (having Reſpect plainly to ſuch a Spirit as this) 'A Man of Underſtanding is of an excellent Spirit;' and by the particular Deſcription Chriſt gives of the Qualities and Temper of ſuch as are truly Bleſſed, that ſhall obtain Mercy, and are God's Children and Heirs, *Matth.* v. 'Bleſſed are the Meek: For they ſhall inherit the Earth. Bleſſed are the Merciful: For they ſhall obtain Mercy. Bleſſed are the Peace-makers: For they ſhall be called the Children of God.' And that this Spirit is the ſpecial Character of the Elect of God, is manifeſt by *Col.* iii. 12, 13. 'Put on therefore, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering; forbearing

bearing one another, and forgiving one another.' And the Apoſtle ſpeaking of that Temper and Diſpoſition which he ſpeaks of as the moſt excellent and eſſential Thing in Chriſtianity, and *that* without which none are true Chriſtians, and the moſt glorious Profeſſion and Gifts are nothing (calling this Spirit by the Name of Charity) he deſcribes it thus; (*1 Cor.* xiii. 4, 5.) 'Charity ſuffereth long and is kind: Charity envieth not: Charity vaunteth not itſelf, is not puffed up; doth not behave itſelf unſeemly; ſeeketh not her own; is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no Evil.' And the ſame Apoſtle, *Gal.* v. deſignedly declaring the diſtinguiſhing Marks and Fruits of true chriſtian Grace, chiefly inſiſts on the Things that appertain to ſuch a Temper and Spirit as I am ſpeaking of, Verſe 22, 23. 'The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs, Goodneſs, Faith, Meekneſs, Temperance.' And ſo does the Apoſtle *James*, in deſcribing true Grace, or *that Wiſdom that is from above*, with that declared deſign, that others who are of a contrary Spirit may not deceive themſelves, and lie againſt the Truth, in profeſſing to be Chriſtians, when they are not, *Jam.* ii. 14,—17. 'If ye have bitter Envying and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not, againſt the Truth: This Wiſdom deſcendeth not from above; but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh. For where Envying and Strife is, there is Confuſion and every evil Work. But the Wiſdom that is from above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, eaſy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits.'

Every Thing that appertains to Holineſs of Heart, does indeed belong to the Nature of true Chriſtianity, and the Character of Chriſtians; but a Spirit of Holineſs appearing in ſome particular Graces, may more eſpecially be called the Chriſtian Spirit or Temper. There are ſome amiable Qualities and Vertues, that do more eſpecially agree with the Nature of the Goſpel Conſtitution, and Chriſtian Profeſſion; becauſe there is a ſpecial

Agreeableneſs

Agreeableneſs in them, with thoſe divine Attributes which God has more remarkably manifeſted and glorified in the Work of Redemption by Jeſus Chriſt, that is the grand Subject of the Chriſtian Revelation; and alſo a ſpecial Agreeableneſs with thoſe Vertues that were ſo wonderfully exerciſed by Jeſus Chriſt towards us in that Affair, and the bleſſed Example he hath therein ſet us; and likewiſe becauſe they are peculiarly agreeable to the ſpecial Drift and Deſign of the Work of Redemption, and the Benefit we thereby receive, and the Relation that it brings us into, to God and one another. And theſe Vertues are ſuch as Humility, Meekneſs, Love, Forgiveneſs, and Mercy. Theſe Things therefore eſpecially belong to the Character of Chriſtians, as ſuch.

Theſe Things are ſpoken of as what are eſpecially the Character of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, the great Head of the Chriſtian Church. They are ſo ſpoken of in the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament; as in that cited *Matth.* xxi. 5. 'Tell ye the Daughter of Sion, behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and ſitting upon an Aſs, and a Colt the Foal of an Aſs.' So Chriſt himſelf ſpeaks of them, *Matth.* xi. 29. 'Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in Heart.' The ſame appears by the Name by which Chriſt is ſo often called in Scripture, *viz.* THE LAMB. And as theſe Things are eſpecially the Character of Chriſt; ſo they are alſo eſpecially the Character of Chriſtians. Chriſtians are Chriſtlike. None deſerve the Name of Chriſtians that are not ſo in their prevailing Character. 'The new Man is renewed, after the Image of him that creates him, Col. iii. 10.' All true Chriſtians 'behold as in a Glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, and are changed into the ſame Image, by his Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 18.' The Elect are all 'predeſtinated to be conformed to the Image of the Son of God, that he might be the Firſt-born among many Brethren,' Rom. viii. 29. 'As we have born the Image of the firſt Man, that is earthly, ſo we muſt alſo

alſo bear the Image of the heavenly: For as is the earthy, ſuch are they alſo that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, ſuch are they alſo that are heavenly, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, 49.' Chriſt is full of Grace; and Chriſtians 'all receive of his Fulneſs, and Grace for Grace:' *i. e.* there is Grace in Chriſtians anſwering to Grace in Chriſt, ſuch an anſwerableneſs as there is between the Wax and the Seal; there is Character for Character: Such Kind of Graces, ſuch a Spirit and Temper, the ſame Things that belong to Chriſt's Character, belong to their's. That Diſpoſition wherein Chriſt's Character does in a ſpecial Manner conſiſt, therein does his Image in a ſpecial Manner conſiſt. Chriſtians that ſhine by reflecting the Light of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, do ſhine with the ſame Sort of Brightneſs, the ſame mild, ſweet and pleaſant Beams. Theſe Lamps of the ſpiritual Temple, that are enkindled by Fire from Heaven, burn with the ſame Sort of Flame. The Branch is of the ſame Nature with the Stock and Root, has the ſame Sap, and bears the ſame Sort of Fruit, The Members have the ſame Kind of Life with the Head. It would be ſtrange if Chriſtians ſhould not be of the ſame Temper and Spirit that Chriſt is of; when 'they are his Fleſh and his Bone, yea, are one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17, and live ſo, that it is not they that live, but Chriſt that lives in them.' A chriſtian Spirit is Chriſt's Mark, that he ſets upon the Souls of his People; his Seal in their Foreheads, bearing his Image and Superſcription. Chriſtians are the Followers of Chriſt: And they are ſo, as they are obedient to that Call of Chriſt, 'Matth. xi. 28, 29. Come to me, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart.' They follow him as the Lamb; 'Rev. xiv. 4. Theſe are they which follow the Lamb witherſoever he goeth.' True Chriſtians are as it were cloathed with the meek, quiet, and loving Temper of Chriſt; for *as many as are in Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.* And in this Reſpect *the Church is cloathed with the Sun,* not only by being cloathed with his imputed Righteouſneſs, but

alſo

alſo by being adorned with his Graces; *Rom.* xiii. 14. Chriſt the great Shepherd, is himſelf a Lamb, and Believers are alſo Lambs; all the Flock are Lambs; 'John xxi. 15. Feed my Lambs.' Luke x. 3. 'I ſend you forth as Lambs, in the Midſt of Wolves.' The Redemption of the Church by Chriſt from the Power of the Devil was typified of old, by *David*'s delivering the *Lamb*, out of the Mouth of the Lion and the Bear.

That ſuch Manner of Vertue as has been ſpoken of, is the very Nature of the Chriſtian Spirit, or the Spirit that worketh in Chriſt and in his Members; and the diſtinguiſhing Nature of it, is evident by this, that *the Dove* is the very Symbol or Emblem, choſen of God, to repreſent it. Thoſe Things are fitteſt Emblems of other Things, which do beſt repreſent *that* which is moſt diſtinguiſhing in their Nature. The Spirit that deſcended on Chriſt, when he was anointed of the Father, deſcended on him *like a Dove*. The Dove is a noted Emblem of Meekneſs, Harmleſſneſs, Peace and Love. But the ſame Spirit that deſcended on the Head of the Church, deſcends to the Members. 'God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into their Hearts, *Gal.* iv. 6. And if any Man has not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9.' There is but one Spirit to the whole myſtical Body, Head and Members, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Eph. iv. 4. Chriſt breathes his own Spirit on his Diſciples, John xx. 22. As Chriſt was anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, deſcending on him like a Dove; ſo Chriſtians alſo 'have an Anointing from the holy One, 1 John ii. 20, 27. And they are anointed with the ſame Oil; 'tis the ſame 'precious Ointment on the Head, that goes down to the Skirts of the Garments:' And on both it is a Spirit of Peace and Love: Pſal. cxxxiii. 1, 2. 'Behold how good, and how pleaſant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity! It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even *Aaron*'s Beard; that went down to the Skirts of his Garments.' The Oil on *Aaron*'s Garments

had

had the same sweet and inimitable Odour, with that on his Head; the Smell of the same sweet Spices. Christian Affections, and a Christian Behaviour, is but the flowing out of the Savour of Christ's sweet Ointments. Because the Church has a dove-like Temper and Disposition, therefore it is said of her that she has Dove's Eyes, Cant. i. 15. 'Behold thou art fair, my Love; behold thou art fair: Thou hast Dove's Eyes.' And Chap. iv. 1. 'Behold thou art fair, my Love; behold thou art fair: Thou hast Dove's Eyes within thy Locks.' The same that is said of Christ, Chap. vi. 12. 'His Eyes are as the Eyes of Doves.' And the Church is frequently compared to a Dove in Scripture, Cant. ii. 14. 'O my Dove, that art in the Clefts of the Rock.'--- Chap. v. 2. 'Open to me my Love, my Dove.' And Chap. vi. 9. 'My Dove, my Undefiled, is but one.' Psal. lxviii. 13. 'Ye shall be as the Wings of a Dove, covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold.' And lxxiv. 13. 'O deliver not the Soul of thy Turtle-Dove unto the Multitude of the Wicked.' The Dove that *Noah* sent out of the Ark, that could find no Rest for the Soul of her Foot, till she returned, was a Type of a true Saint.

Meekness is so much the Character of the Saints, that *the Meek* and *the Godly*, are used as synonymous Terms in Scripture: So Psal. xxxvii. 10, 11. the Wicked and the Meek are set in Opposition one to another, as Wicked and Godly. 'Yet a little While, and the Wicked shall not be,---but the Meek shall inherit the Earth.' So Psal. cxlvii. 6. 'The Lord lifteth up the Meek: He casteth the Wicked down to the Ground.'

'Tis Doubtless very much on this Account, that Christ represents all his Disciples, all the Heirs of Heaven, as little Children, Matth. xix. 14. 'Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.' Matth. x. 42. 'Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a Cup of cold Water, in the Name of a Disciple, verily

verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward.' Matth. xviii. 6. 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, &c. Ver. 10. Take Heed that ye despise not one of these little ones. Ver. 14. It is not the Will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.' John xiii. 33. 'Little Children, yet a little While am I with you.' Little Children are innocent and harmless: They don't do a great deal of Mischief in the World: Men need not be afraid of them: They are no dangerous Sort of Persons: Their Anger don't last long: They don't lay up Injuries in high Resentment, entertaining deep and rooted Malice. So Christians, in Malice, are Children, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 20. Little Children are not guileful and deceitful; but plain and simple: They are not versed in the Arts of Fiction and Deceit; and are Strangers to artful Disguises. They are yieldable and flexible, and not wilful and obstinate; don't trust to their own Understanding, but rely on the Instructions of Parents, and others of superior Understanding. Here is therefore a fit and lively Emblem of the Followers of the Lamb. Persons being thus like little Children, is not only a Thing highly commendable, and what Christians approve of, and aim at, and which some of extraordinary Proficiency do attain to; but it is their universal Character, and absolutely necessary in order to entering into the Kingdom of Heaven; unless Christ was mistaken; Matth. xviii. 3. 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' Mark x. 15. 'Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, he shall not enter therein.

But here some may be ready to say, Is there no such Thing as christian Fortitude, and Boldness for Christ being good Soldiers in the Christian Warfare, and coming out bold against the Enemies of Christ and his People?

To

To which I answer, There doubtless is such a Thing. The whole christian Life is compared to a Warfare, and fitly so. And the most eminent Christians are the best Soldiers, endowed with the greatest Degrees of christian Fortitude. And it is the Duty of God's People to be stedfast, and vigorous in their Opposition to the Designs and Ways of such, as are endeavouring to overthrow the Kingdom of Christ, and the Interest of Religion. But yet many Persons seem to be quite mistaken concerning the Nature of christian Fortitude. 'Tis an exceeding diverse Thing from a brutal Fierceness, or the Boldness of Beasts of Prey. True christian Fortitude consists in Strength of Mind, through Grace, exerted in two Things: In ruling and suppressing the *evil*, and unruly Passions and Affections of the Mind; and in stedfastly and freely exerting, and following *good* Affections and Dispositions, without being hindred by sinful Fear, or the Opposition of Enemies. But the Passions that are restrained and kept under, in the Exercise of this christian Strength and Fortitude, are those very Passions that are vigorously and violently exerted, in a false Boldness for Christ. And those Affections that are vigorously exerted in true Fortitude, are those christian holy Affections, that are directly contrary to them. Tho' christian Fortitude appears, in withstanding and counteracting the Enemies that are without us; yet it much more appears, in resisting and suppressing the Enemies that are within us; because they are our worst and strongest Enemies, and have greatest Advantage against us. The Strength of the good Soldier of Jesus Christ, appears in nothing more, than in stedfastly maintaining the holy Calm, Meekness, Sweetness, and Benevolence of his Mind, amidst all the Storms, Injuries, strange Behaviour, and surprising Acts and Events of this evil and unreasonable World. The Scripture seems to intimate, that true Fortitude consists chiefly in this, Prov. xvi. 32. 'He that is slow

to

to Anger, is better than the Mighty; and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City.'

The directeſt and ſureſt Way in the World, to make a right Judgment, what a holy Fortitude is, in fighting with God's Enemies; is to look to the Captain of all God's Hoſts, and our great Leader and Example; and ſee wherein his Fortitude and Valour appeared, in his chief Conflict, and in the Time of the greateſt Battle that ever was, or ever will be fought with theſe Enemies, when he fought with them all alone, and of the People there was none with him, and exerciſed his Fortitude in the higheſt Degree that ever he did, and got that glorious Victory that will be celebrated in the Praiſes and Triumphs of all the Hoſts of Heaven, throughout all Eternity; even to Jeſus Chriſt in the Time of his laſt Sufferings; when his Enemies in Earth and Hell made their moſt violent Attack upon him, compaſſing him round on every Side, like renting and roaring Lions. Doubtleſs here we ſhall ſee the Fortitude of a holy Warrior and Champion in the Cauſe of God, in its higheſt Perfection and greateſt Luſtre, and an Example fit for the Soldiers to follow, that fight under this Captain. But how did he ſhew his holy Boldneſs and Valour at that Time? Not in the Exerciſe of any fiery Paſſions; not in fierce and violent Speeches, and vehemently declaiming againſt, and crying out of the intolerable Wickedneſs of Oppoſers, giving 'em their own in plain Terms; but in not opening his Mouth when afflicted and oppreſſed, in going as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before his Shearers, is dumb, not opening his Mouth; praying that the Father would forgive his cruel Enemies, becauſe they knew not what they did; not ſhedding others Blood; but with all-conquering Patience and Love, ſhedding his own. Indeed one of his Diſciples, that made a forward Pretence to *Boldneſs for Chriſt*, and confidently declared he would ſooner die with Chriſt than deny him, began to lay about him with a Sword: But Chriſt meekly

meekly rebukes him, and heals the Wound he gives. And never was the Patience, Meekneſs, Love, and Forgiveneſs of Chriſt, in ſo glorious a Manifeſtation, as at that Time. Never did he appear ſo much a *Lamb*, and never did he ſhew ſo much of the *dove like* Spirit, as at that Time. If therefore we ſee any of the Followers of Chriſt, in the Midſt of the moſt violent, unreaſonable and wicked Oppoſition, of God's and his own Enemies, maintaining under all this Temptation, the Humility, Quietneſs, and Gentleneſs of a Lamb, and the Harmleſſneſs, and Love, and Sweetneſs of a Dove, we may well judge that here is a good Soldier of Jeſus Chriſt.

When Perſons are fierce and violent, and exert their ſharp and bitter Paſſions, it ſhows Weakneſs, inſtead of Strength and Fortitude. 1 *Cor.* iii. at the Beginning, 'And I, Brethren, could not ſpeak unto you, as unto Spiritual, but as unto Carnal, even as unto Babes in Chriſt,—For ye are yet Carnal: For whereas there is among you Envying and Strife, and Diviſions, are ye not carnal, and walk as Men?'

There is a pretended Boldneſs for Chriſt, that ariſes from no better Principle than Pride. A Man may be forward to expoſe himſelf to the Diſlike of the World, and even to provoke their Diſpleaſure, out of Pride. For 'tis the Nature of ſpiritual Pride to cauſe Men to ſeek Diſtinction and Singularity; and ſo oftentimes to ſet themſelves at War with thoſe that they call carnal, that they may be more highly exalted among their Party. True Boldneſs for Chriſt is univerſal, and overcomes all, and carries Men above the Diſpleaſure of Friends and Foes; ſo that they will forſake all rather than Chriſt; and will rather offend all Parties, and be thought meanly of by all, than offend Chriſt. And that Duty which tries whether a Man is willing to be deſpiſed by them that are of his own Party, and thought the leaſt worthy to be regarded by them, is a much more proper Trial of his Boldneſs for Chriſt, than his being

forward to expoſe himſelf to the Reproach of his Oppoſers. The Apoſtle ſought not Glory, not only of Heathens and *Jews*, but of Chriſtians; as he declares, 1 *Theſ.* ii. 26.* He is bold for Chriſt, that has Chriſtian Fortitude enough, to confeſs his Fault openly, when he has committed one that requires it, and as it were to come down upon his Knees before Oppoſers. Such Things as theſe are a vaſtly greater Evidence of holy Boldneſs, than reſolutely and fiercely confronting Oppoſers.

As ſome are much miſtaken concerning the Nature of true *Boldneſs* for Chriſt, ſo they are concerning chriſtian *Zeal*. 'Tis indeed a Flame, but a ſweet One: Or rather it is the Heart and Fervour of a ſweet Flame. For the Flame of which it is the Heat, is no other than that of divine Love, or chriſtian Chaaity; which is the ſweeteſt and moſt benevolent Thing that is, or can be, in the Heart of Man or Angel. Zeal is the Fervour of this Flame, as it ardently and vigorouſly goes out towards the Good that is its Object, in Deſires of it, and Purſuit after it; and ſo conſequentially, in Oppoſition to the Evil that is contrary to it, and impedes it. There is indeed Oppoſition, and vigorous Oppoſition, that is a Part of it, or rather is an Attendant of it; but it is againſt *Things*, and not *Perſons*. Bitterneſs againſt the *Perſons* of Men is no Part of it, but is very contrary to it; inſomuch that ſo much the warmer true Zeal is, and the higher it is raiſed, ſo much the farther are Perſons from ſuch Bitterneſs, and ſo much fuller of Love, both to the Evil and to the Good. As appears from what has been juſt now obſerved, that it is no other in its very Nature and Eſſence, than the Fervour of a Spirit of chriſtian Love. And as to what Oppoſition there is in it, to *Things*, it is firſtly and chiefly againſt the *evil*

Things

* Mr. *Shepard*, ſpeaking of Hypocrites affecting Applauſe, ſays "hence Men forſake their Friends, and trample under Foot the "Scorns of the World: They have Credit elſewhere. To maintain their Intereſt in the Love of godly Men, they will ſuffer "much." Parable of the ten Virgins, Part I. P. 180.

Things in the Perſon himſelf, who has this Zeal; againſt the Enemies of God and Holineſs, that are in his own Heart; (as theſe are moſt in his View, and what he is moſt to do with) and but ſecondarily againſt the Sins of others. And therefore there is nothing in a true Chriſtian Zeal, that is contrary to that Spirit of Meekneſs, Gentleneſs and Love, that Spirit of a little Child, a Lamb and Dove, that has been ſpoken of; but is entirely agreeable to it, and tends to promote it.

But to ſay ſomething particularly concerning this chriſtian Spirit I have been ſpeaking of, as exerciſed in theſe three Things, *Forgiveneſs*, *Love* and *Mercy*; I would obſerve, that the Scripture is very clear and expreſs concerning the abſolute Neceſſity of each of theſe, as belonging to the Temper and Character of every Chriſtian.

It is ſo as to a *forgiving Spirit*, or a Diſpoſition to overlook and forgive Injuries. Chriſt gives it to us both as a negative and poſitive Evidence; and is expreſs in teaching us, that if we are of ſuch a Spirit, 'tis a Sign we are in a State of Forgiveneſs and Favour ourſelves; and that if we are not of ſuch a Spirit, we are not forgiven of God; and ſeems to take ſpecial Care that we ſhould take good Notice of it, and always bear it on our Minds. *Matth.* vi. 12, 14, 15. 'Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.—For if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you: But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.' Chriſt expreſſes the ſame again at another Time, *Mark* xi. 25, 26. and again in *Matth.* xviii. 22, to the End, in the Parable of the Servant that owed his Lord ten thouſand Talents, that would not forgive his fellow Servant an hundred Pence; and therefore was delivered to the Tormentors. In the Application of the Parable Chriſt ſays, Verſe 35. 'So likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do, if ye from your Heart forgive not every one his Brother their Treſpaſſes.

And that all true Saints are of a *loving*, benevolent and beneficent Temper, the Scripture is very plain and abundant. Without it the Apoſtle tells us, 'Tho' we ſhould ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, we are as a ſounding Braſs or a tinkling Cymbal: And that tho' we have the Gift of Prophecy, and underſtand all Myſteries, and all Knowledge; yet without this Spirit we are nothing.' And there is no one Virtue or Diſpoſition of the Mind, that is ſo often, and ſo expreſly inſiſted on, in the Marks that are laid down in the New Teſtament, whereby to know true Chriſtians. 'Tis often given as a Sign that is peculiarly diſtinguiſhing, by which all may know Chriſt's Diſciples, and by which they may know themſelves: And is often laid down, both as a negative and poſitive Evidence. Chriſt calls the Law of Love, by Way of Eminency, *his Commandment*, John xiii. 34. 'A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.' And Chap. xv. 12. 'This is *my Commandment*, that ye love one another as I have loved you.' And Verſe 17. 'Theſe Things I command you, that ye love one another.' And ſays, Chap. xiii. 35. 'By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye love one another.' And Chap. xiv. 21. (ſtill with a ſpecial Reference to this which he calls *his* Commandment) 'he that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.' The beloved Diſciple, who had ſo much of this ſweet Temper himſelf, abundantly inſiſts on it, in his Epiſtles. There is none of the Apoſtles, is ſo much in laying down expreſs Signs of Grace, for Profeſſors to try themſelves by, as he; and in his Signs, he inſiſts ſcarcely on any Thing elſe, but a Spirit of chriſtian Love, and an agreeable Practice; 1 John ii. 9, 10. 'He that ſaith he is in the Light, and hateth his Brother, is in Darkneſs even until now. He that loveth his Brother abideth in the Light, and there is none Occaſion of Stumbling in him.' Chap. iii. 14. 'We know that we are paſſed from

from Death to Life, becauſe we love the Brethren. He that loveth not his Brother, abideth in Death.' Verſe 18, 19. 'My little Children, let us not love in Word and in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth. And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him.' Verſe 23, 24. 'This is his Commandment, that we ſhould love one another. And he that keepeth his Commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. Chap. iv, 7, 8. 'Beloved, let us love one another; for Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is Love.' Verſe 12, 13. 'No Man hath ſeen God at any Time: If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.' Verſe 16. 'God is Love: And he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.' Verſe 20. 'If a Man ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar: For he that loveth not his Brother that he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?'

And the Scripture is as plain as it is poſſible it ſhould be, that none are true Saints, but thoſe whoſe true Character it is, that they are of a Diſpoſition to *pity* and *relieve* their Fellow-creatures, that are poor, indigent and afflicted; Pſal. xxxvii. 21. 'The Righteous ſheweth Mercy, and giveth.' Verſe 26. 'He is ever merciful, and lendeth.' Pſal. cxii. 5. 'A good Man ſheweth Favour, and lendeth.' Verſe 9. 'He hath diſperſed abroad, and given to the Poor.' Prov. xiv. 31. 'He that honoureth God, hath Mercy on the Poor.' Prov. xxi. 26. 'The Righteous giveth, and ſpareth not.' Jer. xxii. 16. 'He judged the Cauſe of the Poor and Needy: Then it was well with him: Was not this to know me, ſaith the Lord?' Jam. i. 27. 'Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, T

viſit

viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Affliction, &c.' Hoſ. vi. 6. 'For I deſired Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the Knowledge of God, more than Burnt-Offerings.' Matth. v. 7. 'Bleſſed are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy.' 2 Cor. viii. 8. 'I ſpeak not by Commandment, but by Occaſion of the Forwardneſs of others, and to prove the Sincerity of your Love.' Jam. ii. 13, 14, 15, 16. 'For he ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath ſhewed no Mercy.—What doth it profit my Brethren, though a Man ſaith he hath Faith, and have not Works? Can Faith ſave him? If a Brother or Siſter be naked, and deſtitute of daily Food, and one of you ſay unto them, depart in Peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe Things which are needful for the Body; what doth it profit?' 1 John iii. 17. 'Whoſo hath this World's Goods, and ſeeth his Brother have Need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him? Chriſt in that Deſcription he gives us of the Day of Judgment, *Matth.* xxv. (which is the moſt particular that we have in all the Bible) repreſents that Judgment will be paſs'd at that Day, according as Men have been found to have been of a merciful Spirit and Practice, or otherwiſe. Chriſt's Deſign in giving ſuch a Deſcription of the Proceſs of that Day, is plainly to poſſeſs all his Followers with that Apprehenſion, that unleſs this was their Spirit and Practice, there was no Hope of their being accepted and own'd by him, at that Day. Therefore this is an Apprehenſion that we ought to be poſſeſs'd with. We find in Scripture, that a *righteous Man* and a *merciful Man*, are ſynonimous Expreſſions; Iſai. lvii. 1. 'The *Righteous* periſheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart; and the *merciful Men* are taken away, none conſidering that the *Righteous* is taken away from the Evil to come.'

Thus we ſee how full, clear and abundant, the Evidence from Scripture is, that thoſe who are truly gracious

ous, are under the Government of that Lamb-like, dove-like Spirit of Jesus Christ, and that this is essentially and eminently the Nature of the saving Grace of the Gospel, and the proper Spirit of true Christianity. We may therefore undoubtedly determine that all truly christian Affections are attended with such a Spirit; and that this is the natural Tendency of the Fear and Hope, the Sorrow and the Joy, the Confidence and the Zeal of true Christians.

None will understand me that true Christians have no Remains of a contrary Spirit, and can never, in any Instances, be guilty of a Behaviour disagreeable to such a Spirit. But this I affirm, and shall affirm 'till I deny the Bible to be any Thing worth, that every Thing in Christians that belongs to true Christianity, is of this Tendency, and works this Way; and that there is no true Christian upon Earth, but is so under the prevailing Power of such a Spirit, that he is properly denominated from it, and it is truly and justly his Character: And that therefore Ministers, and others have no Warrant from Christ to encourage Persons, that are of a contrary Character and Behaviour, to think they are converted, because they tell a fair Story of Illuminations and Discoveries. In so doing they would set up their own Wisdom against Christ's, and judge without, and against that Rule by which Christ has declared all Men should know his Disciples. Some Persons place Religion so much in certain transient Illuminations and Impressions (especially if they are in such a particular Method and Order) and so little in the Spirit and Temper Persons are of, that they greatly deform Religion, and form Notions of Christianity quite different from what it is, as delineated in the Scriptures. The Scripture knows of no such true Christians, as are of a sordid, selfish, cross and contentious Spirit. Nothing can be invented that is a greater Absurdity, than a morose, hard, close, high-spirited, spiteful true Christian. We must learn the Way of bringing Men to Rules, and not Rules to

Men

Men, and ſo ſtrain and ſtretch the Rules of God's Word, to take in ourſelves, and ſome of our Neighbours, 'till we make them wholly of none Effect.

'Tis true that Allowances muſt be made for Men's natural Temper, with Regard to theſe Things, as well as others. But not ſuch Allowances, as to allow Men, that once were Wolves and Serpents, to be now converted, without any remarkable Change in the Spirit of their Mind. The Change made by true Converſion, is wont to be moſt remarkable and ſenſible, with Reſpect to that which before was the Wickedneſs the Perſon was moſt notoriouſly guilty of. Grace has a great Tendency to reſtrain and mortify ſuch Sins, as are contrary to the Spirit that has been ſpoken of, as it has to mortify Drunkenneſs or Laſciviouſneſs. Yea, the Scripture repreſents the Change wrought by Goſpel Grace, as eſpecially appearing in an Alteration of the former Sort; Iſai. xi. 6, ——9. 'The Wolf ſhall dwell with the Lamb; and the Leopard ſhall lie down with the Kid; and the Calf, and the young Lion, and the Fatling together; and a little Child ſhall lead them: And the Cow, and the Bear ſhall feed; their young ones ſhall lie down together: And the Lion ſhall eat Straw like the Ox: And the ſuckling Child ſhall play on the Hole of the Aſp; and the weaned Child ſhall put his Hand on the Cockatrice Den. They ſhall not hurt nor deſtroy in all my holy Mountain. For the Earth ſhall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.' And to the ſame Purpoſe is *Iſai.* lxv. 25. Accordingly we find, that in the primitive Times of the chriſtian Church, Converts were remarkably changed in this Reſpect: Tit. iii. 3, &c. 'For we ourſelves alſo were ſometimes fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures; living in Malice and Envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the Kindneſs and Love of God our Saviour, towards Men, appeared.-------He ſaved us, by the Waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.' And

Col.

Col. ii. 7, 8. 'In the which ye alſo walked, ſome Time, when ye lived in them. But now you alſo put off all theſe; Anger, Wrath, Malice, Blaſphemy, filthy Communication out of your Mouth.'

IX. Gracious Affections ſoften the Heart, and are attended and followed with a chriſtian Tenderneſs of Spirit.

Falſe Affections, however Perſons may ſeem to be melted by them while they are new, yet have a Tendency in the End to harden the Heart. A Diſpoſition to ſome Kind of Paſſions may be eſtabliſhed; ſuch as imply Self-ſeeking, Self-Exaltation, and Oppoſition to others. But falſe Affections, with the Deluſion that attends them, finally tend to ſtupify the Mind, and ſhut it up againſt thoſe Affections wherein Tenderneſs of Heart conſiſts: And the Effect of them at laſt is, that Perſons in the ſettled Frame of their Minds, become leſs affected with their preſent and paſt Sins, and leſs conſcientious with Reſpect to future Sins, leſs moved with the Warnings and Cautions of God's Word, or God's Chaſtiſements in his Providence, more careleſs of the Frame of their Hearts, and the Manner and Tendency of their Behaviour. leſs quick-ſighted to diſcern what is ſinful, leſs afraid of the Appearance of Evil, than they were while they were under legal Awakenings and Fears of Hell. Now they have been the Subjects of ſuch and ſuch Impreſſions and Affections, and have a high Opinion of themſelves, and look on their State to be ſafe; they can be much more eaſy than before, in living in the Neglect of Duties that are troubleſome and inconvenient; and are much more ſlow and partial in complying with difficult Commands; are in no Meaſure ſo alarmed at the Appearance of their own Defects and Tranſgreſſions; are embolden'd to favour themſelves more, with Reſpect to the Labour, and painful Care and Exactneſs in their Walk, and more eaſily yield to Temptations, and the Solicitations of their Luſts; and

have

have far leſs Care of their Behaviour, when they come into the holy Preſence of God, in the Time of publick or private Worſhip. Formerly it may be, under legal Convictions, they took much Pains in Religion, and denied themſelves in many Things: But now they think themſelves out of Danger of Hell, they very much put off the Burden of the Croſs, and ſave themſelves the Trouble of difficult Duties, and allow themſelves more of the Comfort of the Enjoyment of their Eaſe and their Luſts.

Such Perſons as theſe, inſtead of embracing Chriſt as their *Saviour from Sin*, they truſt in him as the *Saviour of their Sins:* Inſtead of flying to him as their Refuge *from their ſpiritual Enemies*, they make Uſe of him as the Defence *of their ſpiritual Enemies*, *from God*, and to ſtrengthen them againſt him. They make Chriſt the Miniſter of Sin, and great Officer and Vicegerent of the Devil, to ſtrengthen his Intereſt, and make him above all Things in the World ſtrong againſt JEHOVAH; ſo that they may ſin againſt him with good Courage, and without any Fear, being effectually ſecured from Reſtraints by his moſt ſolemn Warnings and moſt awful Threatnings. They truſt in Chriſt to preſerve to them the quiet Enjoyment of their Sins, and to be their Shield to defend them from God's Diſpleaſure; while they come cloſe to him, even to his Boſom, the Place of his Children, to fight againſt him, with their mortal Weapons, hid under their Skirts.* However ſome of theſe

* "Theſe are Hypocrites that believe, but fail in Regard of the "Uſe of the Goſpel, and of the Lord Jeſus. And theſe we read of, "*Jude* iii. viz. of ſome Men *that did turn Grace into Wantonneſs.* "For therein appears the exceeding Evil of a Man's Heart, that "not only the Law, but alſo the glorious Goſpel of the Lord Jeſus, "works in him all Manner of Unrighteouſneſs. And 'tis too com-"mon for Men at the firſt Work of Converſion, O then to cry for "Grace and Chriſt, and afterwards grow licentious, live and lie in "the Breach of the Law, and take their Warrant for their Courſe "from the Goſpel. *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. P. 126.

Again, P. 232. Mr. *Shepard* ſpeaks of ſuch Hypocrites, as thoſe, "Who like ſtrange Eggs, being put into the ſame Neſt, where "honeſt

theſe, at the ſame Time, make a great Profeſſion of Love to God, and Aſſurance of his Favour, and great Joy in taſting the Sweetneſs of his Love.

After this Manner *they* truſted in Chriſt, that the Apoſtle *Jude* ſpeaks of, who *crept in* among the Saints *unknown*; but were really *ungodly Men, turning the Grace of God into Laſciviouſneſs*, Jude iv. Theſe are they that truſt in their being righteous; and becauſe God has promiſed that *the Righteous ſhall ſurely live*, or certainly be ſaved, are therefore embolden'd to *commit Iniquity*, whom

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" honeſt Men have lived, they have been hatch'd up; and when " they are young, keep their Neſt, and live by crying and opening " their Mouths wide after the Lord and Food of his Word; but when " their Wings are grown, and they have got ſome Affections, ſome " Knowledge, ſome Hope of Mercy, are harden'd thereby to fly from " God." And adds, " Can that Man be good, whom God's Grace " makes worſe?"

Again, Part II. P. 167. " When Men fly to Chriſt in Times of " Peace, that ſo they may preſerve their Sins with greater Peace of " Conſcience; ſo that Sin makes them fly to Chriſt, as well as " Miſery; not that they may deſtroy and aboliſh Sin, but that they " may be preſerved in their Sins with Peace; then Men may be ſaid " to apprehend Chriſt only by a ſeeming Faith.—Many an Heart " ſecretly ſaith this, If I can have my Sin and Peace, and Conſcience " quiet for the preſent, and God merciful to pardon it afterward; " hence he don't rely (as he ſaith) only on the Mercy of God in " Chriſt: And now this hardens and blinds him, and makes him " ſecure, and his Faith is Sermon-Proof, nothing ſtirs him.—And " were it not for their Faith they ſhould deſpair, but this keeps them " up. And now they think if they have any Trouble of Mind, the " Devil troubles 'em; and ſo makes Chriſt and Faith Protectors of " Sin, not Purifiers from Sin; which is moſt dreadful; turning " Grace to Wantonneſs, as they did ſacrifice. So theſe would ſin " under the Shadow of Chriſt, becauſe the Shadow is good and ſweet, " *Mich.* iii. 11. They had ſubtil fly Ends in good Duties; for therein " may lie a Man's Sin: Yet they lean upon the Lord.——When " Money-changers came into the Temple, *You have made it a Den " of Thieves.* Thieves when hunted, fly to their Den or Cave, and " there they are ſecure againſt all Searchers, and Hue-and-cries; ſo " here. But Chriſt whipped them out. So when Men are purſued, " with Cries and Fears of Conſcience, away to Chriſt they go as to " their Den: Not as Saints to pray and lament out the Life of their " Sin there; but to preſerve their Sin. This is vile: Will the Lord " receive ſuch?"

whom God threatens in Ezek. xxxiii, 13. *When I ſhall ſay to the Righteous, that he ſhall ſurely live; if he truſts to his own Righteouſneſs, and commit Iniquity; all his Righteouſneſs ſhall not be remembred; but for his Iniquity that he hath committed, he ſhall die for it.*

Gracious affections are of a quite contrary Tendency; they turn a Heart of Stone more and more into a Heart of Fleſh. An holy Love and Hope are Principles that are vaſtly more efficacious upon the Heart, to make it tender, and to fill it with a Dread of Sin, or whatever might diſpleaſe and offend God, and to engage it to Watchfulneſs and Care and Strictneſs, than a ſlaviſh Fear of Hell. Gracious Affections, as was obſerved before, flow out of a contrite Heart, or (as the Word ſignifies) a bruiſed Heart, bruiſed and broken with godly Sorrow; which makes the Heart tender, as bruiſed Fleſh is tender, and eaſily hurt. Godly Sorrow has much greater Influence to make the Heart tender, than meer legal Sorrow from ſelfiſh Principles.

The Tenderneſs of the Heart of a true Chriſtian, is elegantly ſignified by our Saviour, in his comparing ſuch a one to a little Child. The Fleſh of a little Child is very tender: ſo is the Heart of one that is new-born. This is repreſented in what we are told of *Naaman*'s Cure of his Leproſy, by his waſhing in *Jordan*, by the Direction of the Prophet; which was undoubtedly a Type of the renewing of the Soul, by waſhing in the Laver of Regeneration. We are told, 2 Kings v. 14. That *he went down, and dipped himſelf ſeven Times in* Jordan, *according to the Saying of the Man of God; and his Fleſh came again, like unto the Fleſh of a little Child.* Not only is the Fleſh of a little Child tender, but his Mind is tender. A little Child has his Heart eaſily moved, wrought upon and bowed: So is a Chriſtian in ſpiritual Things. A little Child is apt to be affected with Sympathy, to weep with them that weep, and can't well bear to ſee others in Diſtreſs: So it is with a Chriſtian; *John* xi. 35. *Rom.* xii. 15. 1 *Cor.* xii. 26.

26. A little Child is eaſily won by Kindneſs: So is a Chriſtian. A little Child is eaſily affected with Grief at temporal Evils, and has his Heart melted, and falls a weeping: Thus tender is the Heart of a Chriſtian, with Regard to the Evil of Sin. A little Child is eaſily affrighted at the Appearance of outward Evils, or any Thing that threatens its Hurt: So is a Chriſtian apt to be alarmed at the Appearance of moral Evil, and any Thing that threatens the Hurt of the Soul. A little Child when it meets Enemies, or fierce Beaſts, is not apt to truſt its own Strength, but flies to its Parents for Refuge: So a Saint is not ſelf-confident in engaging ſpiritual Enemies, but flies to Chriſt. A little Child is apt to be ſuſpicious of Evil in Places of Danger, afraid in the Dark, afraid when left alone, or far from Home: So is a Saint apt to be ſenſible of his ſpiritual Dangers, jealous of himſelf, full of Fear when he can't ſee his Way plain before him, afraid to be left alone, and to be at a Diſtance from God; Prov. xxviii. 14. *Happy is the Man that fearth alway; but he that hardeneth his Heart ſhall fall into Miſchief.* A little Child is apt to be afraid of Superiors, and to dread their Anger, and tremble at their Frowns and Threatnings: So is a true Saint with Reſpect to God: Pſal. cxix. 120. *My Fleſh trembleth for Fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* Iſai. lxvi. 2. *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and trembleth at my Word.* Verſe 5. *Hear ye the Word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his Word.* Ezra ix. 4. *Then were aſſembled unto me, every one that trembleth at the Words of the God of* Iſrael. Chap. x. 3. *According to the Counſel of my Lord, and of thoſe that tremble at the Commandment of our God.* A little Child approaches Superiors with Awe: So do the Saints approach God with holy Awe and Reverence. Job xiii. 11. *Shall not his Excellency make you afraid, and his Dread fall upon you.* Holy Fear is ſo much the Nature of true Godlineſs, that it is called in Scripture by no other Name more frequently, than the *Fear of God.*

Hence

Hence gracious Affections don't tend to make Men bold, forward, noisy and boisterous; but rather to *speak trembling*; (Hos. xiii. 1. *When* Ephraim *spake trembling, he exalted himself in* Israel; *but when he offended in* Baal, *he died,*) and to cloath with a Kind of holy Fear in all their Behaviour towards God and Man; agreeable to *Psal.* ii. 11. 1 *Pet.* iii. 15. 2 *Cor.* vii. 15. *Eph.* vi. 5. 1 *Pet.* iii. 2. *Rom.* xi. 20.

But here some may object and say, Is there no such Thing as a holy Boldness in Prayer, and the Duties of divine Worship? I answer, There is doubtless such a Thing; and it is chiefly to be found in eminent Saints, Persons of great Degrees of Faith and Love. But this holy Boldness is not in the least opposite to *Reverence*; though it be to *Disunion* and *Servility*. It aboliſhes or lessens that Disposition which arises from *moral Distance* or *Alienation*; and also *Distance of Relation*, as that of a Slave: But not at all, that which becomes the *natural Distance*, whereby we are infinitely inferior. No Boldness in poor sinful Worms of the Dust, that have a right Sight of God and themselves, will prompt them to approach to God with less Fear and Reverence, than spotless and glorious Angels in Heaven; who cover their Faces before his Throne; *Isai.* vi. at the Beginning. *Rebecca*, (who in her Marriage with *Isaac*, in almost all its Circumstances, was manifestly a great Type of the Church, the Spouse of Christ) when she meets *Isaac*, lights off from her Camel, and takes a Veil, and covers herself; although she was brought to him as his Bride, to be with him, in the nearest Relation, and most intimate Union, that Mankind are ever united one to another in.* *Elijah*, that great Prophet, who had so much holy Familiarity with God, at a Time of special Nearness to God, even when he conversed with him in the Mount, wrapped

* Dr. *Ames*, in his Cases of Conscience, Book III. Chap. iv. speaks of an holy Modesty in the Worship of God, as one Sign of true Humility.

wrapped his Face in his Mantle. Which was not becauſe he was terrified with any ſervile Fear, by the terrible *Wind*, and *Earthquake*, and *Fire*; but after theſe were all over, and God ſpake to him as a Friend, *in a ſtill ſmall Voice*; 1 Kings xix. 12, 13. *And after the Fire, a ſtill ſmall Voice: And it was ſo, when* Elijah *heard it, he wrapped his Face in his Mantle.* And *Moſes*, with whom God ſpake Face to Face, as a Man ſpeaks with his Friend, and was diſtinguiſhed from all the Prophets, in the Familiarity with God that he was admitted to; at a Time when he was brought neareſt of all, when God ſhewed him his Glory in that ſame Mount, where he afterwards ſpake to *Elijah*; *He made Haſte, and bowed his Head towards the Earth, and worſhipped.* Exod. xxxiv. 8. There is in ſome Perſons, a moſt unſuitable and unſufferable Boldneſs, in their Addreſſes to the great JEHOVAH, in an Affectation of an holy Boldneſs, and Oſtentation of eminent Nearneſs and Familiarity; the very Thoughts of which would make them ſhrink into nothing, with Horror and Confuſion, if they ſaw the Diſtance that is between God and them. They are like the *Phariſee*, that boldly came up near, in a Confidence of his own Eminency in Holineſs. Whereas if they ſaw their Vileneſs, they would be more like the *Publican*, that *ſtood afar off, and durſt not ſo much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven; but ſmote upon his Breaſt, ſaying, God be merciful to me a Sinner.* It becomes ſuch ſinful Creatures as we, to approach a holy God (altho' with Faith, and without Terror,) yet with Contrition, and penitent Shame and Confuſion of Face. It is foretold that this ſhould be the Diſpoſition of the Church, in the Time of her higheſt Privileges on Earth, in her latter Day of Glory, when God ſhould remarkably comfort her, by revealing his Covenant-Mercy to her; Ezek. xvi. 60, to the End. *I will eſtabliſh unto thee an everlaſting Covenant. Then thou ſhalt remember thy Ways, and be aſhamed. —And I will eſtabliſh my Covenant with thee; and thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord: That thou mayeſt remember,*

and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done; saith the Lord God. The Woman that we read of in the 7th Chapter of *Luke*, that was an eminent Saint, and had much of that true Love which casts out Fear, by Christ's own Testimony, Verse 47, she approached Christ in an amiable, and acceptable Manner, when she came with that humble Modesty, Reverence and Shame, when she stood at his Feet, weeping *behind him*, as not being fit to appear before his Face, and washed his Feet with her Tears.

One Reason why gracious Affections are attended with this Tenderness of Spirit which has been spoken of, is that true Grace tends to promote Convictions of Conscience. Persons are wont to have Convictions of Conscience before they have any Grace: And if afterwards they are truly converted, and have true Repentance, and Joy, and Peace in believing; this has a Tendency to put an End to *Terrors*, but has no Tendency to put an End to *Convictions of Sin*, but to increase them. It don't stupify a Man's Conscience; but makes it more sensible, more easily and thoroughly discerning the Sinfulness of that which is sinful, and receiving a greater Conviction of the henious and dreadful Nature of Sin, susceptive of a quicker and deeper Sense of it, and more convinced of his own Sinfulness, and Wickedness of his Heart: and consequently it has a Tendency to make him more jealous of his Heart. Grace tends to give the Soul a further and better *Conviction* of the same Things concerning Sin, that it was *convinced* of under a legal Work of the Spirit of God; *viz.* Its great Contrariety to the Will and Law and Honour of God, the Greatness of God's Hatred of it, and Displeasure against it, and the dreadful Punishment it exposes to and deserves. And not only so, but it *convinces* the Soul of something further concerning Sin, that it saw nothing of while only under legal *Convictions*; and that is the infinitely hateful Nature of Sin, and its Dreadful-

ness

neſs upon that Account. And this makes the Heart tender with Reſpect to Sin; like *David*'s Heart, that ſmote him, when he had cut off *Saul*'s Skirt. The Heart of a true Penitent is like a burnt Child, that dreads the Fire. Whereas on the Contrary, he that has had a counterfeit Repentance, and falſe Comforts and Joys, is like Iron that has been ſuddenly heat and quenched; it becomes much harder than before. A falſe Converſion puts an End to Convictions of Conſcience; and ſo either takes away, or much diminiſhes that Conſcientiouſneſs, which was manifeſted under a Work of the Law.

All gracious Affections have a Tendency to promote this chriſtian Tenderneſs of Heart, that has been ſpoken of: Not only a godly Sorrow, but alſo a gracious Joy; Pſal. ii. 11. 'Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling.' As alſo a gracious Hope; Pſal. xxxiii. 18. 'Behold the Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his Mercy.' And Pſal. cxlvii. 11. 'The Lord taketh Pleaſure in them that Fear him, and in them that hope in his Mercy.' Yea, the moſt confident and aſſured Hope, that is truly gracious, has this Tendency. The higher an holy Hope is raiſed, the more there is of this chriſtian Tenderneſs. The baniſhing of a ſervile Fear, by a holy Aſſurance, is attended with a proportionable Increaſe of a reverential Fear. The diminiſhing of the Fear of the Fruits of God's Diſpleaſure in future Puniſhment, is attended with a proportionable Increaſe of Fear of his Diſpleaſure itſelf: The diminiſhing of the Fear of Hell, with an Increaſe of the Fear of Sin. The vaniſhing of Jealouſies of the Perſon's State, is attended with a proportionable Increaſe of Jealouſy of his Heart, in a Diſtruſt of its Strength, Wiſdom, Stability, Faithfulneſs, *&c.* The leſs apt he is to be afraid of natural Evil, having 'his Heart fixed truſting in God,' and ſo not afraid of evil Tidings;' the more apt is he to be alarmed with the Appearance of moral Evil, or the

Evil of Sin. As he has more holy Boldneſs, ſo he has leſs of Self-confidence, and a forward aſſuming Boldneſs, and more Modeſty. As he is more ſure than others of Deliverance from Hell, ſo he has more of a Senſe of the Deſert of it. He is leſs apt than others to be ſhaken in Faith; but more apt than others to be moved with ſolemn Warnings, and with God's Frowns, and with the Calamities of others. He has the firmeſt Comfort, but the ſofteſt Heart: Richer than others, but pooreſt of all in Spirit: The talleſt and ſtrongeſt Saint, but the leaſt and tendereſt Child amongſt them.

X. Another Thing wherein thoſe Affections that are truly gracious and holy, differ from thoſe that are falſe, is *beautiful Symmetry and Proportion.*

Not that the Symmetry of the Vertues, and gracious Affections of the Saints, in this Life, is perfect: It oftentimes, is in many Things defective, thro' the Imperfection of Grace, for want of proper Inſtructions, thro' Errors in Judgment, or ſome particular Unhappineſs of natural Temper, or Defects in Education, and many other Diſadvantages that might be mentioned. But yet there is, in no wiſe, that monſtrous Diſproportion in gracious Affections, and the various Parts of true Religion in the Saints, that is very commonly to be obſerved, in the falſe Religion, and counterfeit Graces of Hypocrites.

In the truly holy Affections of the Saints is found that Proportion, which is the natural Conſequence of the Univerſality of their Sanctification. They have the whole Image of Chriſt upon them: They have 'put off the old Man, and have put on the new Man' entire in all his Parts and Members. 'It hath pleaſed the Father that in Chriſt all Fulneſs ſhould dwell:' There is in him every Grace: 'He is full of Grace and Truth: And they that are Chriſt's, do 'of his Fulneſs receive, and Grace for Grace;' (*John* i. 14, 16.) *i. e.* there is every Grace in them, which is in Chriſt: 'Grace for Grace;' that is, Grace anſwerable to Grace: There is

no

no Grace in Chriſt, but there is its Image in Believers to anſwer it: The Image is a true Image; and there is ſomething of the ſame beautiful Proportion in the Image, which is in the Original; there is Feature for Feature, and Member for Member. There is Symmetry and Beauty in God's Workmanſhip. The natural Body, which God hath made, conſiſts of many Members; and all are in a beautiful Proportion: So it is in the new Man, conſiſting of various Graces and Affections. The Body of one that was born a perfect Child, may fail of exact Proportion through Diſtemper, and the Weakneſs and Wounds of ſome of its Members; yet the Diſproportion is in no Meaſure like that of thoſe that are born Monſters.

It is with Hypocrites, as it was with *Ephraim* of old, at a Time when God greatly complains of their Hypocriſy; Hoſ. vii. 'Ephraim is a Cake not turned,' half roaſted and half raw: There is commonly no Manner of Uniformity in their Affections.

There is in many of them a great Partiality, with Regard to the ſeveral Kinds of religious Affections: Great Affections in ſome Things, and no Manner of Proportion in others. An holy Hope and holy Fear go together in the Saints, as has been obſerved from *Pſal.* xxxiii. 18, and cxlvii. 11. But in ſome of theſe is the moſt confident Hope, while they are void of Reverence, Self-jealouſy and Caution, and to a great Degree caſt off Fear. In the Saints, Joy and holy Fear go together, though the Joy be never ſo great; as it was with the Diſciples, in that joyful Morning of Chriſt's Reſurrection, Matth. xxviii. 8. 'And they departed quickly from the Sepulchre, with Fear and GREAT Joy.* But many of theſe rejoice without trembling:

Their

* "Renewed Care and Diligence follows the Sealings of the "Spirit. Now is the Soul at the Foot of Chriſt, as *Mary* was at "the Sepulchre, *with Fear and great Joy*. He that travels the Road "with a rich Treaſure about him, is afraid of a Thief in every "Buſh." *Flavel*'s Sacramental Meditations. Medi. 4.

Their Joy is of that Sort, that is truly oppoſite to godly Fear.

But particularly, one great Difference between Saints and Hypocrites is this, that the Joy and Comfort of the Former is attended with godly Sorrow and Mourning for Sin. They have not only Sorrow to prepare them for their firſt Comfort, but after they are comforted, and their Joy eſtabliſhed. As it is foretold of the Church of God, that they ſhould mourn and loath themſelves for their Sins, after they were returned from the Captivity, and were ſettled in the Land of *Canaan*, the Land of Reſt, and the Land that flows with Milk and Honey, Ezek. xx. 42, 43. 'And ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I ſhall bring you into the Land of *Iſrael*, into the Country for the which I lifted up mine Hand, to give it to your Fathers. And there ſhall ye remember your Ways, and all your Doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye ſhall loath yourſelves in your own Sight, for all your Evils that ye have committed.' As alſo in Ezek. xvi. 61, 62, 63. A true Saint is like a little Child in this Reſpect; he never had any godly Sorrow before he was born again; but ſince has it often in Exerciſe: As a little Child, before it is born, and while it remains in Darkneſs, never cries; but as ſoon as ever it ſees the Light, it begins to cry; and thenceforward is often crying. Although Chriſt hath borne our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows, ſo that we are freed from the *Sorrow of Puniſhment*, and may now ſweetly feed upon the Comforts Chriſt hath purchaſed for us; yet that hinders not but that our feeding on theſe Comforts ſhould be attended with the *Sorrow of Repentance*. As of old, the Children of *Iſrael* were commanded, evermore to feed upon the paſchal Lamb, with bitter Herbs.* True Saints are ſpoken of in Scripture

* "If Repentance accompanies Faith, 'tis no Preſumption to "believe. Many know the Sin; and hence believe in Chriſt, truſt "in Chriſt; and there is an End of their Faith. But what Con-"feſſion

Scripture, not only as thoſe that have mourn'd for Sin, but as thoſe that do mourn, whoſe Manner it is ſtill to mourn; Matth. v. 4. 'Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted.'

Not only is there often in Hypocrites, an eſſential Deficiency, as to the various Kinds of religious Affections;

" feſſion and Sorrow for Sin? What more Love to Chriſt follows " this Faith? Truly none. Nay, their Faith is the Cauſe why they " have none. For they think, if I truſt in Chriſt to forgive me, he " will do it; and there is an End of the Buſineſs. Verily this " Hedge Faith, this Bramble-Faith, that catches hold on Chriſt, " and pricks and ſcratches Chriſt, by more Impenitency, more Con- " tempt of him, is meer Preſumption; which ſhall one Day be " burnt up and deſtroyed by the Fire of God's Jealouſy. Fie upon " that Faith, that ſerves only to keep a Man from being tormented " before his Time! Your Sins would be your Sorrows, but that " your Faith quiets you. But if Faith be accompanied with Repen- " tance, Mourning for Sin, more Eſteem of God's Grace in Chriſt; " ſo that nothing breaks thy Heart more than the Thoughts of " Chriſt's unchangeable Love to one ſo vile, and this Love makes " thee love much, and love him the more; as thy Sin increaſeth, ſo " thou deſireſt thy Love's Increaſe; and now the Stream of thy " Thoughts run, how thou mayeſt live to him that died for thee: " This was *Mary*'s Faith, who ſat at Chriſt's Feet weeping, waſhing " them with her Tears, and loving much, becauſe much was for- " given." *Shepard*'s Sound Believer, Page 28, 129

" You ſhall know godly Sorrow (ſays Dr. *Preſton*, in his Diſcourſe " on *Paul*'s Converſion) by the Continuance of it: It is conſtant; " but worldly Sorrow is but a Paſſion of the Mind, it changes, it laſts " not. Tho' for the preſent it may be violent and ſtrong, and work " much outwardly; yet it comes but by Fits, and continues not; " Like a Land Flood, which violently, for the preſent, overflows " the Banks; but it will away again; it is not always thus. But " godly Sorrow is like a Spring, that ſtill keeps his Running both " Winter and Summer, Wet and Dry, in Heat and Cold, early and " late. So this godly Sorrow is the ſame in a regenerate Man ſtill; " take him when you will, he is ſtill ſorrowing for Sin. This godly " Sorrow ſtands like the Centre of the Earth, which removes not, " but ſtill remains."

" I am perſwaded, many a Man's Heart is kept from breaking and " mourning, becauſe of this. He ſaith (it may be) that he is a vile " Sinner; but I truſt in Chriſt, *&c.* If they do go to Chriſt to " deſtroy their Sin, this makes them more ſecure in their Sin. For " (ſay they) I cannot help it, and Chriſt muſt do all. Whereas " Faith makes the Soul mourn after the Lord the more." *Shepard's* Parable of the Ten Virgins, Part II. P. 168.

tions; but alſo a ſtrange Partiality and Diſproportion, in the ſame Affections, with Regard to different Objects.

Thus as to the Affection of *Love*, ſome make high Pretences, and a great Shew of Love to God and Chriſt, and it may be have been greatly affected with what they have heard or thought concerning them: But they han't a Spirit of Love and Benevolence towards Men, but are diſpoſed to Contention, Envy, Revenge, and Evil-ſpeaking; and will, it may be, ſuffer an old Grudge to reſt in their Boſoms towards a Neighbour, for ſeven Years together, if not twice ſeven Years; living in real Ill-will and Bitterneſs of Spirit towards him. And it may be in their Dealings with their Neighbours, are not very ſtrict and conſcientious in obſerving the Rule of *doing to others, as they would that they ſhould do to them:* 1 John iv. 20. *If a Man ſay, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Liar: For he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath ſeen, how can he love God whom he hath not ſeen?* And on the other Hand, there are others, that appear as if they had a great deal of Benevolence to Men, are very good natur'd and generous in their Way; but have no Love to God.

And as to Love to Men, there are ſome that have flowing Affections to ſome; but their Love is far from being of ſo extenſive and univerſal a Nature, as a truly chriſtian Love is. They are full of dear Affections to ſome, and full of Bitterneſs towards others. They are knit to their own Party, them that approve of them, love them and admire them; but are fierce againſt thoſe that oppoſe and diſlike them. Matth. v. 45, 46. *Be like your Father which is in Heaven: For he maketh his Sun to riſe on the Evil and on the Good.—For if ye love them which love you, what Reward have ye? Do not even the Publicans the ſame?* Some ſhew a great Affection to their Neighbours, and pretend to be raviſhed with the Company of the Children of God *abroad*; and at the ſame Time are uncomfortable and churliſh towards their Wives and other near Relations *at Home*, and are very negligent

negligent of relative Duties. And as to the great Love to Sinners and Oppoſers of Religion, and the great Concern for their Souls, that there is an Appearance of in ſome, even to extreme Diſtreſs and Agony, ſingling out a particular Perſon, from among a Multitude, for its Object, there being at the ſame Time no general Compaſſion to Sinners, that are in equally miſerable Circumſtances, but what is in a monſtrous Diſproportion; this ſeems to be of the Nature of a gracious Affection. Not that I ſuppoſe it to be at all ſtrange, that Pity to the periſhing Souls of Sinners ſhould be to a Degree of Agony, if other Things are anſwerable; or that a truly gracious Compaſſion to Souls ſhould be exerciſed much more to ſome Perſons than others that are equally miſerable, eſpecially on ſome particular Occaſions: There may many Things happen to fix the Mind, and affect the Heart, with Reſpect to a particular Perſon, at ſuch a Juncture: and without Doubt ſome Saints have been in great Diſtreſs for the Souls of particular Perſons, ſo as to be as it were in Travail for them: But when Perſons appear, at particular Times, in racking Agonies for the Soul of ſome ſingle Perſon, far beyond what has been uſually heard or read of in eminent Saints, but appear to be Perſons that have a Spirit of meek and fervent Love, Charity, and Compaſſion to Mankind in general, in a far leſs Degree than they; I ſay, ſuch Agonies are greatly to be ſuſpected, for Reaſons already given; *viz.* That the Spirit of God is wont to give Graces, and gracious Affections in a beautiful Symmetry and Proportion.

And as there is a monſtrous Diſproportion in the Love of ſome, in its Exerciſes towards different Perſons, ſo there is in their ſeeming Exerciſes of Love towards the ſame Perſons. Some Men ſhew a Love to others as to their outward Man, they are liberal of their worldly Subſtance, and often give to the Poor; but have no Love to, or Concern for the Souls of Men. Others pretend a great Love to Men's Souls, that are not compaſſionate

paſſionate and charitable towards their Bodies. The making a great Shew of Love, Pity, and Diſtreſs for Souls, coſts them nothing; but in order to ſhew Mercy to Men's Bodies, they muſt part with Money out of their Pockets. But a true chriſtian Love to our Brethren, extends both to their Souls and Bodies. And herein is like the Love and Compaſſion of Jeſus Chriſt. He ſhewed Mercy to Men's Souls, by labouring for them in preaching the Goſpel to them; and ſhewed Mercy to their Bodies, in going about doing Good, healing all Manner of Sickneſs and Diſeaſes among the People. We have a remarkable Inſtance of Chriſt's having Compaſſion at once both to Men's Souls and Bodies, ſhewing Compaſſion by feeding both, in Mark vi. 34, &c. *And Jeſus, when he came out, ſaw much People, and was moved with Compaſſion towards them; becauſe they were as Sheep not having a Shepherd; And he began to teach them many Things.* Here was his Compaſſion to their Souls. And in the Sequel, we have an Account of his Compaſſion to their Bodies, becauſe they had been a long While *having nothing to eat:* He fed five Thouſand of them with five Loaves and two Fiſhes. And if the Compaſſion of profeſſing Chriſtians towards others don't work in the ſame Ways, it is a Sign that it is no true chriſtian Compaſſion.

And furthermore, 'tis a Sign that Affections are not of the right Sort, if Perſons ſeem to be much affected with the bad Qualities of their Fellow-Chriſtians, as the Coldneſs and Lifeleſſneſs of other Saints, but are in no Proportion affected with their own Defects and Corruptions. A true Chriſtian may be affected with the Coldneſs and Unſavourineſs of other Saints, and may mourn much over it. But at the ſame Time he is not ſo apt to be affected with the Badneſs of any Body's Heart as his own. This is moſt in his View: This he is moſt quick-ſighted to diſcern: This he ſees moſt of the Aggravations of, and is moſt ready to cry out of. And a leſſer Degree of Vertue will bring him to pity himſelf

himself, and be concerned at his own Calamities, than rightly to be affected with others Calamities. And if Men have not attained to the Less, we may determine they never attained to the Greater.

And here by the Way, I would observe, that it may be laid down as a general Rule, That if Persons pretend that they come to high Attainments in Religion, but have never yet arrived to the lesser Attainments, 'tis a Sign of a vain Pretence. As if Persons pretend that they have got beyond meer *Morality*, to live a *spiritual* and *divine* Life; but really have not come to be so much as *moral* Persons. Or pretend to be greatly affected with the Wickedness of their Hearts, and are not affected with the palpable Violations of God's Commands in their Practice, which is a lesser Attainment. Or if they pretend to be brought to be even willing to be damned for the Glory of God, but have no Forwardness to suffer a little in their Estates and Names and worldly Convenience, for the Sake of their Duty. Or pretend that they are not afraid to venture their Souls upon Christ, and commit their All to God, trusting to his bare Word, and the Faithfulness of his Promises, for their eternal Welfare; but at the same Time, havn't Confidence enough in God, to dare to trust him with a little of their Estates, bestowed to charitable Uses: I say, when it is thus with Persons, their Pretences are manifestly vain. He that is in a Journey, and imagines he has got far beyond such a Place in his Road, and never yet came to it, must be mistaken; and he is not yet arrived to the Top of the Hill, that never yet got half-way thither. But this by the Way.

The same that has been observed of the Affection of *Love*, is also to be observed of *other* religious Affections. Those that are true, extend in some Proportion, to the various Things that are their due and proper Objects: But when they are false, they are commonly strangely Disproportionate. So it is with religious *Desires* and Longings: These in the Saints, are to those Things

that

that are ſpiritual and excellent in general, and that in ſome Proportion to their Excellency, Importance or Neceſſity, or their near Concern in them: But in falſe Longings, 'tis often far otherwiſe. They will ſtrangely run, with an impatient Vehemence, after ſomething of leſs Importance, when other Things of greater Importance are neglected. Thus for Inſtance, ſome Perſons from Time to Time, are attended with a vehement Inclination, and unaccountably violent Preſſure, to declare to others what they experience, and to exhort others; when there is at the ſame Time, no Inclination, in any Meaſure equal to it, to other Things, that true Chriſtianity has as great, yea, a greater Tendency to; as the pouring out the Soul before God in ſecret earneſt Prayer and Praiſe to him, and more Conformity to him, and living more to his Glory, *&c.* We read in Scripture of *Groanings that cannot be uttered*, and *Soul-breakings for the Longing it hath*, and *Longings*, *Thirſtings*, and *Pantings*, much more frequently to theſe latter Things, than the former.

And ſo as to *Hatred* and *Zeal*; when theſe are from right Principles, they are againſt Sin in general, in ſome Proportion to the Degree of Sinfulneſs; Pſal. cxix. 104. *I hate every falſe Way.* So Verſe 128. But a falſe Hatred and Zeal againſt Sin, is againſt ſome particular Sin only. Thus ſome ſeem to be very zealous againſt Prophaneneſs, and Pride in Apparel, who themſelves are notorious for Covetouſneſs, Cloſeneſs, and it may be Backbiting, Envy towards Superiors, Turbulency of Spirit towards Rulers, and rooted Ill-will to them that have injured them. Falſe Zeal is againſt the Sins of others, while Men have no Zeal againſt their own Sins. But he that has true Zeal, exerciſes it chiefly againſt his own Sins: Tho' he ſhews alſo a proper Zeal againſt prevailing and dangerous Iniquity in others. And ſome pretend to have a great Abhorrence of their own Sins of Heart, and cry out much of their inward Corruption; and yet make light of Sins in Practice,

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nd ſeem to commit them without much Reſtraint or Remorſe; though theſe imply Sin, both in Heart and Life.

As there is a much greater Diſproportion in the Exerciſes of falſe Affections, than of true, as to different Objects; ſo there is alſo, as to different Times. For ltho' true Chriſtians are not always alike; yea, there is very great Difference, at different Times, and the beſt have Reaſon to be greatly aſhamed of their Unſteadineſs; yet there is in no wiſe that Inſtability and Inconſtancy in the Hearts of thoſe who are true *Virgins, that follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth*, which is in falſe-hearted Profeſſors. The righteous Man is truly ſaid to be one *whoſe Heart is fixed, truſting in God*, (Pſalm cxii. 7.) and to have *his Heart eſtabliſhed with Grace*, (Heb. xiii. 9.) and to *hold on his Way*. Job. xvii. 9. *The Righteous ſhall hold on his Ways, and he that hath clean Hands ſhall wax ſtronger and ſtronger.* 'Tis ſpoken of as a Note of the Hypocriſy of the Jewiſh Church, that they *were as a ſwift Dromedary, traverſing her Ways.*

If therefore Perſons are religious only by Fits and Starts; if they now and then ſeem to be raiſed up to the Clouds in their Affections, and then ſuddenly fall down again, loſe all, and become quite careleſs and carnal, and this is their Manner of carrying on Religion; if they appear greatly moved, and mightily engaged in Religion, only in extraordinary Seaſons, in the Time of a remarkable Out-pouring of the Spirit, or other uncommon Diſpenſation of Providence, or upon the real or ſuppoſed Receipt of ſome great Mercy, when they have received ſome extraordinary temporal Mercy, or ſuppoſe that they are newly converted, or have lately had what they call a great Diſcovery; but quickly return to ſuch a Frame, that their Hearts are chiefly upon other Things, and the prevailing Bent of their Hearts and Stream of their Affections is ordinarily towards the Things of this World; when they are like the Children of *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, who had their Affections highly

raiſed

raiſed by what God had done for them at the Red Sea, and ſang his Praiſe, and ſoon fell a luſting after the Fleſh-Pots of *Egypt*, but then again when they came to Mount *Sinai*, and ſaw the great Manifeſtations God made of himſelf there, ſeem'd to be greatly engaged again, and mighty forward to enter into Covenant with God, ſaying, *All that the Lord hath ſpoken will we do, and be obedient*, but then quickly made them a golden Calf; I ſay, when it is thus with Perſons, 'tis a Sign of the Unſoundneſs of Affections.* They are like the Waters in the Time of

* Dr. *Owen*, (on the Spirit, Book III. Chap. 2. § 18.) ſpeaking of a common Work of the Spirit, ſays, "This Work operates "greatly on the Affections: we have given Inſtances, in Fear, "Sorrow, Joy and Delight, about ſpiritual Things, that are ſtirred "up and acted thereby: But yet it comes ſhort in two Things, of a "thorough Work upon the Affections themſelves. For 1*ſt*, It doth "not *fix* them. And 2*dly*, It doth not *fill* them. 1. It is required "that our Affections be fixed on heavenly and ſpiritual Things: "And true Grace will affect it; Col. iii. 1, 2. *If ye be riſen with "Chriſt, ſeek thoſe Things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on "the Right Hand of God. Set your Affections on Things above.* The "Joys, the Fears, the Hopes, the Sorrows, with Reference unto "ſpiritual and eternal Things, which the Work before-mentioned "doth produce, are evanid, uncertain, unſtable, not only as to the "Degrees, but as to the very Being of them. Sometimes they are "as a River ready to overflow its Banks, Men cannot but be pouring "them out on all Occaſions; and ſometimes as Waters that fail, no "Drop comes from them. Sometimes they are hot, and ſometimes "cold; ſometimes up, and ſometimes down; ſometimes all Heaven, "and ſometimes all World; without Equality, without Stability. "But true Grace fixeth the Affections on ſpiritual Things. As to "the Degrees of their Exerciſe, there may be, and is in them a great "Variety, according as they may be excited, aided, aſſiſted by "Grace and the Means of it; or obſtructed and impeded, by the "Interpoſition of Temptations and Diverſions. But the conſtant "Bent and Inclination of renewed Affections, is unto ſpiritual "Things; as the Scripture every where teſtifieth, and as Experience "doth confirm."

"There is, (ſays Dr. *Preſton*) a certain Love, by Fits, which "God accepts not; when Men come and offer to God great Promiſes, "like the Waves of the Sea, as big as Mountains: Oh, they think, "they will do much for God! But their Minds change; and they "become as thoſe high Waves, which at laſt fall level with the other Waters.

of a Shower of Rain, which during the Shower, and a little after, run like a Brook, and flow abundantly; but are presently quite dry: And when another Shower comes, then they will flow again. Whereas a true Saint is like a Stream from a living Spring; which tho' it may be greatly increased by a Shower of Rain, and diminished in Time of Drought; yet constantly runs: (John iv. 14. *The Water that I shall give him, shall be in him, a Well of Water springing up*, &c.) or like a Tree planted by such a Stream, that has a constant Supply at the Root, and is always green, even in Time of the greatest Drought. Jer. xvii. 7, 8. 'Blessed is the Man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose Hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a Tree planted by the Waters, and that spreadeth out her Roots by the River; and shall not see when Heat cometh; but her Leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the Year of Drought; neither shall cease from yielding Fruit.' Many Hypocrites are like Comets, that appear for a While with a mighty Blaze; but are very unsteady and irregular in their Motion, (and are therefore called wandering Stars, *Jude* xiii.) and their Blaze soon disappears, and they appear but once in a great While. But the true Saints are like the fixed Stars, which, tho' they rise and set, and are often clouded, yet are steadfast in their Orb, and may truly be said to shine with a constant Light. Hypocritical Affections are like a violent Motion; like that of the Air that is moved with Winds. (*Jude* xii.) But gracious

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" Waters. If a Man should prefer thee great Kindnesses, and thou " shouldst afterwards come to him to make use of him, and he should " look strangely upon thee, as if he were never acquainted with " thee: How would'st thou esteem of such Love? If we are now on, " now off, in our Love, God will not esteem of such Love." Discourse on the divine Love of Christ.

Mr. *Flavel*, speaking of these changeable Professors, says, " These " Professors have more of the Moon than of the Sun; little Light, " less Heat, and many Changes. They deceive many, yea, they " deceive themselves, but cannot deceive God. They want that " Ballast and Establishment in themselves, that would have kept them " tight and steady." Touchstone of Sincerity, Chap. II. § 2.

gracious Affections are more a natural Motion, like the Stream of a River; which though it has many Turns hither and thither, and may meet with Obſtacles, and run more freely and ſwiftly in ſome Places than others; yet in the general, with a ſteady and conſtant Courſe, tends the ſame Way, 'till it gets to the Ocean.

And as there is a ſtrange Unevenneſs and Diſproportion in falſe Affections, at different *Times*; ſo there often is in different *Places*. Some are greatly affected from Time to Time, when in Company; but have nothing that bears any Manner of Proportion to it, in Secret, in cloſe Meditation, ſecret Prayer, and converſing with God, when alone, and ſeparated from all the World. † A true Chriſtian doubtleſs delights in religious Fellowſhip, and Chriſtian Converſation, and finds much to affect his Heart in it: But he alſo delights at Times to retire from all Mankind, to converſe with God in ſolitary Places. And this alſo has it's peculiar Advantages for fixing his Heart, and engaging it's Affections. True Religion diſpoſes Perſons to be much alone, in ſolitary Places, for holy Meditation and Prayer. So it wrought in *Iſaac*, *Gen.* 24. 63. And which is much more

† "The Lord is neglected ſecretly, yet honoured openly; becauſe "there is no Wind in their Chambers to blow their Sails; and there- "fore there they ſtand ſtill. Hence many Men keep their Profeſſion, "when they loſe their Affection. They have by the one a Name "to live (and that is enough) tho' their Hearts be dead. And hence "ſo long as you love and commend them, ſo long they love you; "but if not, they will forſake you. They were warm only by ano- "ther's Fire, and hence having no Principle of Light within, ſoon "grow dead. This is the Water that turns a Phariſee's Mill.'—— *Shepard*'s Par. Part I. p. 180.

"The Hypocrite (ſays Mr. *Flavel*) is not for the Cloſet, but the "Synagogue; *Matth.* vi. 5, 6. 'Tis not his Meat and Drink to re- "tire from the Clamour of the World, to enjoy God in Secret."— Touchſtone of Sincerity, Chap. VII. § 2.

Dr. *Ames*, in his Caſes of Conſcience, Lib. III. Chap. v. ſpeaks of it as a Thing by which Sincerity may be known, "That Perſons "being obedient in the Abſence, as well as in the Preſence of "Lookers on; in Secret, as well, yea more than in public;" alledging *Phil.* ii. 12. and *Matth.* vi. 6.

more, so it wrought in Jesus Christ. How often do we read of his retiring into Mountains and solitary Places, for holy Converse with his Father? 'Tis difficult to conceal great Affections, but yet gracious Affections are of a much more silent and secret Nature, than those that are counterfeit. So it is with the gracious Sorrow of the Saints. So it is with their Sorrow for their own Sins. § Thus the Future gracious Mourning of true Penitents, at the Beginning of the latter Day Glory, is represented as being so secret, as to be hidden from the Companions of their Bosom; Zech. xii. 12, 13, 14. 'And the Land shall mourn, every Family apart. The Family of the House of *David* apart, and their Wives apart. The Family of the House of *Nathan* apart, and their Wives apart. The Family of the House of *Levi* apart, and their Wives apart. The Family of *Shimei* apart, and their Wives apart. All the Families that remain, every Family apart, and their Wives apart.' So it is with their Sorrow for the Sins of others. The Saints Pains and Travailing for the Souls of Sinners is chiefly in secret Places; Jer. xiii. 17. 'If ye will not hear it, my Soul shall weep in secret Places for your Pride: And mine Eye shall weep sore, and run down with Tears; because the Lord's Flock is carried away captive.' So it is with gracious Joys: They are *hidden Manna*, in this Respect, as well as others; Rev. ii. 17. The Psalmist seems to speak of his sweetest Comforts, as those that were to be had in Secret; Psal. lxiii.. 5. 'My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise thee with joyful Lips; when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate upon thee in the Night Watches.' Christ calls forth his Spouse, away from the World, into retired Places, that he may

§ Mr. *Flavel*, in reckoning up those Things, wherein the Sorrow of Saints is distinguished from the Sorrow of Hypocrites, about their Sins, says, "Their Troubles for Sin are more private, and silent Troubles than others are; their Sore runs in the Night."—Touchstone of Sincerity, Chap. VI. § v.

give her his ſweeteſt Love; Cant. vii. 11. 12. 'Come my Beloved, let us go forth into the Field, let us lodge in the Villages: There will I give thee my Love.' The moſt eminent divine Favours that the Saints obtained, that we read of in Scripture, were in their Retirement. The principal Manifeſtations that God made of himſelf, and his Covenant-Mercy to *Abraham*, were when he was alone, apart from his numerous Family; as any one will judge that carefully reads his Hiſtory. *Iſaac* received that ſpecial Gift of God to him, *Rebekah*, who was ſo great a Comfort to him, and by whom he obtained the promiſed Seed, walking alone, meditating in the Field. *Jacob* was retired for ſecret Prayer, when Chriſt came to him, and he wreſtled with him, and obtained the Bleſſing. God revealed himſelf to *Moſes* in the Buſh, when he was in a ſolitary Place in the Deſert, in Mount *Horeb*; Exod. iii. at the Beginning. And afterwards, when God ſhewed him his Glory, and he was admitted to the higheſt Degree of Communion with God that ever he enjoyed; he was alone, in the ſame Mountain, and continued there forty Days and forty Nights, and then came down with his Face ſhining. God came to thoſe great Prophets, *Elijah* and *Eliſha*, and converſed freely with them, chiefly in their Retirement. *Elijah* converſed alone with God at Mount *Sinai*, as *Moſes* did. And when Jeſus Chriſt had his greateſt Prelibation of his future Glory, when he was transfigur'd; it was not when he was with the Multitude, or with the twelve Diſciples, but retired into a ſolitary Place in a Mountain, with only three ſelect Diſciples, charging them that they ſhould tell no Man, 'till he was riſen from the Dead. When the Angel *Gabriel* came to the bleſſed Virgin, and when the Holy Ghoſt came upon her, and the Power of the Higheſt overſhadowed her, ſhe ſeems to have been alone, and to be in this Matter hid from the World; her neareſt and deareſt earthly Friend *Joſeph*, that had betrothed her (tho' a juſt Man) knew nothing of the Matter. And ſhe that

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first partook of the Joy of Christ's Resurrection, was alone with Christ at the Sepulchre; *John* xx. And when the beloved Disciple was favoured with those wonderful Visions of Christ, and his future Dispensations towards the Church and the World, he was alone in the Isle of *Patmos*. Not but that we have also Instances of great Privileges that the Saints have receiv'd when with others; or that there is not much in christian Conversation, and social and public Worship, tending greatly to refresh and rejoice the Hearts of the Saints. But this is all I aim at by what has been said, to shew that it is the Nature of true Grace, that however it loves christian Society in its Place, yet it in a peculiar Manner delights in Retirement, and secret Converse with God. So that if Persons appear greatly engaged in social Religion, and but little in the Religion of the Closet, and are often highly affected when with others, and but little moved when they have none but God and Christ to converse with, it looks very darkly upon their Religion.

XI. Another great and very distinguishing Difference between gracious Affections and others is, that gracious Affections, the higher they are raised, the more is a spiritual Appetite and Longing of Soul after spiritual Attainments, encreased. On the contrary, false Affections rest satisfied in themselves. *

* "Truly there is no Work of Christ that's right (says Mr. *Shepard*) but it carries the Soul to long for more of it." Par. of the ten Virgins, Part I. p. 136.

And again, "There is in true Grace an infinite Circle: A Man "by thirsting receives; and receiving thirsts for more. But hence "the Spirit is not poured out abundantly on Churches; because "Men shut it out, by shutting in, and contenting themselves with "their common Graces and Gifts; *Matth.* vii. 29. Examine if it "be not so." Ibid. p. 182.

And in p. 210, he says, "This I say, True Grace as it comforts, "so it never fills, but puts an Edge on the Appetite: More of that "Grace Lord! Thus *Paul*, Phil. iii. 13, 14. Thus *David: Out "of my Poverty I have given*, &c. 1 Chron. xxix. 3, 17, 18. It's "a sure Way never to be deceived in lighter Strokes of the Spirit, "to be thankful for any, but to be content with no Measure of it. "And this cuts the Thread of Difference, between a superficial "lighter Stroke of the Spirit, and that which is sound."

The more a true Saint loves God with a gracious Love, the more he desires to love him, and the more uneasy is he at his Want of Love to him: The more he hates Sin, the more he desires to hate it, and laments that he has so much remaining Love to it: The more he mourns for Sin, the more he longs to mourn for Sin: The more his Heart is broke, the more he desires it should be broke: The more he thirsts and longs after God and Holiness, the more he longs to long, and breathe out his very Soul in Longings after God: The kindling and raising of gracious Affections is like kindling of a Flame; the higher it is raised, the more ardent it is; and the more it burns, the more vehemently does it tend and seek to burn. So that the spiritual Appetite after Holiness, and an Increase of holy Affections, is much more lively and keen in those that are eminent in Holiness, than others; and more when Grace and holy Affections are in their most lively Exercise, than at other Times. 'Tis as much the Nature of one that is spiritually new-born, to thirst after Growth in Holiness, as 'tis the Nature of a new-born Babe, to thirst after the Mother's Breast; who has the sharpest Appetite, when best in Health; 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. *As new-born Babes, desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby; if so be that ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.* The most that the Saints have in this World, is but a Taste, a Prelibation of that future Glory which is their proper Fulness; 'tis only an Earnest of their future Inheritance in their Hearts; 2 *Cor.* i. 22. and v. 5. and *Eph.* i. 14. The most eminent Saints in this State are but Children, compared with their future, which is their proper State of Maturity and Perfection; as the Apostle observes, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 10, 11. The greatest Eminency and Perfection, that the Saints arrive to in this World, has no Tendency to Satiety, or to abate their Desires after more; but on the contrary, makes 'em more eager to press forwards; as is evident by the Apostle's Words, Phil. iii. 13, 14, 15. *Forgetting*

ting thoſe Things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe Things which are before, I preſs toward the Mark.—Let us therefore, as many as be PERFECT, *be thus minded.*

The Reaſons of it are, that the more Perſons have of holy Affections, the more they have of that ſpiritual Taſte which I have ſpoken of elſewhere; whereby they perceive the Excellency, and reliſh the divine Sweetneſs of Holineſs. And the more Grace they have, while in this State of Imperfection, the more they ſee their Imperfection and Emptineſs, and Diſtance from what they ought to be; and ſo the more do they ſee their Need of Grace; as I ſhewed at large before, when ſpeaking of the Nature of evangelical Humiliation. And beſides Grace, as long as it is imperfect, is of a growing Nature, and in a growing State. And we ſee it to be ſo with all living Things, that while they are in a State of Imperfection, and in their growing State, their Nature ſeeks after Growth; and ſo much the more, as they are more healthy and proſperous. Therefore the Cry of every true Grace, is like that Cry of true Faith, Mark ix. 24. *Lord I believe, help thou my Unbelief.* And the greater ſpiritual Diſcoveries and Affections the true Chriſtian has, the more does he become of an earneſt Beggar for Grace, and ſpiritual Food, that he may grow; and the more earneſtly does he purſue after it, in the Uſe of proper Means and Endeavours: For true and gracious Longings after Holineſs, are no idle ineffectual Deſires.

But here ſome may object and ſay, How is this conſiſtent with what all allow, That ſpiritual Enjoyments are of a Soul-ſatisfying Nature?

I anſwer, Its being ſo, will appear to be not at all inconſiſtent with what has been ſaid, if it be conſidered in what Manner ſpiritual Enjoyments are ſaid to be of a Soul-ſatisfying Nature. Certainly they are not ſo in that Senſe, that they are of ſo cloying a Nature, that he who has any Thing of them, though but in a very imperfect

imperfect Degree, desires no more. But spiritual Enjoyments are of a Soul-satisfying Nature in the following Respects, 1. They in their Kind and Nature, are fully adapted to the Nature, Capacity and Need of the Soul of Man. So that those who find them, desire *no other Kind* of Enjoyments; they sit down fully contented with that Kind of Happiness which they have, desiring no Change, nor inclining to wander about any more, saying who will shew us any Good? The Soul is never cloyed, never weary; but perpetually giving up itself, with all its Powers to this Happiness. But not that those who have something of this Happiness, desire no more of the same. 2. They are satisfying also in this Respect, that they answer the Expectation of the Appetite. When the Appetite is high to any Thing, the Expectation is consequently so. Appetite to a particular Object, implies Expectation in its Nature. This Expectation is not satisfyed by worldly Enjoyments, the Man expected to have a great Accession of Happiness, but he is disappointed. But it is not so with spiritual Enjoyments: They fully answer and satisfy the Expectation. 3. The Gratification and Pleasure of spiritual Enjoyments is permanent. 'Tis not so with worldly Enjoyments. They in a Sense satisfy particular Appetites; but the Appetite in being satisfied, is glutted, and then the Pleasure is over: And as soon as that is over, the general Appetite of humane Nature after Happiness returns; but is empty, and without any Thing to satisfy it. So that the glutting of a particular Appetite, does but take way from, and leave empty, the general Thirst of Nature. 4. Spiritual Good is satisfying, as there is enough in it, to satisfy the Soul, as to Degree, if Obstacles were but removed, and the enjoying Faculty duly applied. There is Room enough here for the Soul to extend it self; Here is an infinite Ocean of it. If Men ben't satisfied here, in Degree of Happiness, the Cause is with themselves; 'tis because they don't open their Mouths wide enough.

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But these Things don't argue that a Soul has no Appetite excited after more of the same, that has tasted a little; or that his Appetite will not encrease, the more he tastes, 'till he comes to Fulness of Enjoyment: As Bodies that are attracted to the Globe of the Earth, tend to it more strongly, the nearer they come to the attracting Body, and are not at Rest out of the Centre. Spiritual Good is of a satisfying Nature; and for that very Reason, the Soul that tastes, and knows it's Nature, will thirst after it, and a Fulness of it, that it may be satisfied. And the more he experiences, and the more he knows this excellent, unparrallel'd, exquisite, and satisfying Sweetness, the more earnestly will he hunger and thirst for more, 'till he comes to Perfection. And therefore this is the Nature of spiritual Affections, that the greater they be, the greater the Appetite and Longing is, after Grace and Holiness.

But with those Joys, and other religious Affections, that are false and counterfeit, it is otherwise. If before, there was a great Desire, of some Sort, after Grace; as these Affections rise, *that* Desire ceases, or is abated. It may be before, while the Man was under legal Convictions, and much afraid of Hell, he earnestly longed that he might obtain spiritual Light in his Understanding, and Faith in Christ, and Love to God: But now, when these false Affections are risen, that deceive him, and make him confident that he is converted, and his State good, there are no more earnest Longings after Light and Grace: For his End is answer'd; he is confident that his Sins are forgiven him, and that he shall go to Heaven; and so he is satisfied. And especially when false Affections are raised very high, do they put an End to Longings after Grace and Holiness. The Man now is far from appearing to himself, a poor empty Creature: On the Contrary, he is rich, and encreased with Goods; and hardly conceives of any Thing more excellent, than what he has already attain'd to.

Hence there is an End to many Persons Earnestness

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in Seeking, after they have once obtain'd that which they call their Converſion: or at leaſt, after they have had thoſe high Affections, that make them fully confident of it. Before, while they looked upon themſelves as in a State of Nature, they were engaged in ſeeking after God and Chriſt, and cried earneſtly for Grace, and ſtrove in the Uſe of Means: But now they act as tho' they thought their Work was done: They live upon their firſt Work, or ſome high Experiences that are paſt; and there is an End to their crying, and ſtriving after God and Grace.* Whereas the holy Principles that actuate a true Saint, have a far more powerful Influence to ſtir him up to Earneſtneſs in ſeeking God and Holineſs, than ſervile Fear. Hence ſeeking God is ſpoken of as one of the diſtinguiſhing Characters of the Saints; and *thoſe that ſeek God*, is one of the Names by which the Godly are called in Scripture; Pſal. xxiv. 6. *This is the Generation of them that ſeek him, that ſeek thy Face, O* Jacob. Pſal. lxix. 6. *Let not thoſe that ſeek thee be confounded*

* "It is uſual to ſee a falſe Heart moſt diligent in ſeeking the "Lord, when he has been worſt, and moſt careleſs when 'tis beſt. "Hence many at firſt Converſion, ſought the Lord earneſtly: Af- "terwards Affections and Endeavours die; that now they are as "good as the Word can make 'em.—An Hypocrite's laſt End is to "ſatisfy himſelf: Hence he has enough. A Saint's is to ſatisfy "Chriſt: Hence he never has enough." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. p. 157.

"Many a Man, it may be, may ſay, I have nothing in myſelf, and "all is in Chriſt; and comfort himſelf there; and ſo falls aſleep. "Hands off! And touch not this Ark, leſt the Lord ſlay thee: A "Chriſt of Clouts would ſerve your Turn as well." Ibid p. 71.

"An Hypocrite's Light goes out, and grows not. Hence many "ancient Standers take all their Comfort from their firſt Work, and "droop when in old Age." Ibid. p. 77.

And p. 93, 94. Mr. *Shepard*, mentioning the Characters of thoſe that have a dead Hope, ſays, "They that content themſelves with "any Meaſure of Holineſs and Grace, they look not for Chriſt's "Coming and Company. For Saints that do look for him, tho' "they have not that Holineſs and Grace they would have, yet they "reſt not ſatisfied with any Meaſure; 1 John iii. 3. *He that hath "this Hope, purifieth himſelf as he is pure.*—The Saints content not "themſelves

confounded for my Sake. Verse 32. *The Humble shall see this and be glad, and your Heart shall live that seek God.*

" themselves with any Dressings, 'till made glorious; and so fit for " Fellowship with that Spouse.—When a Man leaves not, 'till he " gets such a Measure of Faith and Grace, and now when he has " got this, contents himself with this, as a good Sign that he shall " be saved, he looks not for Christ. Or when Men are heavily laden " with Sin; then close with Christ; and then are comforted, seal'd, " and have Joy that fills them; and now the Work is done.—And " when Men shall not content themselves with any Measure; but " wish they had more, if Grace would grow, while they tell Clocks " and sit idle; and so God must do all; but do not purge themselves, " and make Work of it."

Again, p. 109, " There is never a Hypocrite living, but closeth " with Christ for his own Ends: For he cannot work beyond his " Principle. Now when Men have served their own Turns out of " another Man, away they go, and keep that which they have. " An Hypocrite closeth with Christ, as a Man with a rich Shop: " He will not be at Cost to buy all the Shop, but so much as serves " his Turn. Commonly Men in Horror, seek so much of Christ " as will ease them; and hence profess, and hence seek for so much " of Christ as will credit them; and hence their Desires after Christ " are soon satisfied. *Appetitus Finis est infinitus.*"

" Wo to thee that canst paint such a Christ in thy Head, and re- " ceive such a Christ into thy Heart, as must be a Pander to your " Sloth. The Lord will revenge this Wrong done to his Glory, " with greater Sorrows than ever any felt: To make Christ not only " Meat and Drink to feed, but Cloaths to cover your Sloth.—Why " what can we do? What can we do?—Why as the first *Adam* con- " veys not only Guilt, but Power; so the Second conveys both " Righteousness and Strength." Ibid p. 158.

" When the Lord had given some Light and Affection, and some " Comfort, and some Reformation, now a Man grows full here. " Saints do for God; and carnal Hearts do something too; but a " little fills them, and quiets them, and so damns them. And " hence Men at the first Work upon them, are very diligent in the " Use of Means; but after that, they be brought to neglect Prayer, " sleep out Sermons, and to be careless, sapless, lifeless.—" Ibid p. 210.

" It is an Argument of Want of Grace, when a Man saith to " himself, as the Glutton said to his Soul, *Take thy Rest, for thou* " *hast Goods laid up for many Years.* So thou hast Repentance and " Grace, and Peace enough *for many Years:* And hence the Soul " takes it's Rest, grows sluggish and negligent. Oh, if you die in " this Case, this Night thy Soul shall be taken away to Hell." Ibid. p. 227.

God. And lxxiv. 4. *Let all thoſe that ſeek thee rejoice, and be glad in thee; and let ſuch as love thy Salvation ſay continually, the Lord be magnified.* And the Scriptures every where repreſent the Seeking, Striving and Labour of a Chriſtian, as being chiefly after his Converſion, and his Converſion as being but the Beginning of his Work. And almoſt all that is ſaid in the new Teſtament, of Men's watching, giving earneſt Heed to themſelves, running the Race that is ſet before them, ſtriving and agonizing, wreſtling not with Fleſh and Blood, but Principalities and Powers, fighting, putting on the whole Armour of God, and ſtanding, having done all to ſtand, preſſing forward, reaching forth, continuing inſtant in Prayer, crying to God Day and Night; I ſay, almoſt all that is ſaid in the new Teſtament of theſe Things, is ſpoken of, and directed to the Saints. Where theſe Things are applied to Sinners, ſeeking Converſion once, they are ſpoken of the Saints Proſecution of the great Buſineſs of their high Calling ten Times. But many in theſe Days have got into a ſtrange antiſcriptural Way, of having all their Striving and Wreſtling over before they are converted; and ſo having an eaſy Time of it afterwards, to ſit down and enjoy their Sloth and Indolence; as thoſe that now have a Supply of their Wants, and are become rich and full. But when the Lord *fills the Hungry with good Things, theſe Rich* are like to be *ſent away empty*, Luke i. 53.

But doubtleſs there are ſome Hypocrites, that have only falſe Affections, who will think they are able to ſtand this Trial; and will readily ſay, that they deſire not to reſt ſatisfied with paſt Attainments, but to be preſſing forward, they do deſire more, they long after God and Chriſt, and deſire more Holineſs, and do ſeek it. But the Truth is, their Deſires are not properly the Deſires of Appetite after Holineſs, for its own Sake, or for the moral Excellency and holy Sweetneſs that is in it; but only for By-Ends. They long after clearer Diſcoveries, that they may be better ſatisfied about the

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State of their Souls; or becauſe in great Diſcoveries, Self is gratified, in being made ſo much of by God, and ſo exalted above others, they long to taſte the Love of God (as they call it) more than to have more Love to God. Or, it may be, they have a Kind of forced, fancied or made Longings; becauſe they think they muſt long for more Grace, otherwiſe it will be a dark Sign upon them. But ſuch Things as theſe are far different from the natural, and as it were neceſſary Appetite and Thirſting of the new Man, after God and Holineſs. There is an inward burning Deſire that a Saint has after Holineſs, as natural to the new Creature, as vital Heat is to the Body. There is a holy Breathing and Panting after the Spirit of God, to increaſe Holineſs, as natural to a holy Nature, as breathing is to a living Body. And Holineſs or Sanctification is more directly the Object of it, than any Manifeſtation of God's Love and Favour. This is the Meat and Drink that is the Object of the ſpiritual Appetite; John iv. 34. *My Meat is to do the Will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his Work.* Where we read in Scripture of the Deſires, Longings and Thirſtings of the Saints, Righteouſneſs and God's Laws are much more frequently mention'd, as the Object of them, than any Thing elſe. The Saints *deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word*, not ſo much to teſtify God's Love to them, as *that they may grow thereby* in Holineſs. I have ſhewn before, that Holineſs is that Good which is the immediate Object of a ſpiritual Taſte. But undoubtedly the ſame Sweetneſs that is the chief Object of a ſpiritual Taſte, is alſo the chief Object of a ſpiritual Appetite. Grace is the godly Man's Treaſure; Iſai. xxxiii. 6. *The Fear of the Lord is his Treaſure.* Godlineſs is the Gain that he is covetous and greedy of; 1 Tim. vi. 6. Hypocrites long for Diſcoveries, more for the preſent Comfort of the Diſcovery, and the high Manifeſtation of God's Love in it, than for any ſanctifying Influence of it. But neither a Longing after great Diſcoveries, or after great Taſtes of the Love of God, nor Longing to be in Hea-

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ven, nor Longing to die, are in any Measure so distinguishing Marks of true Saints, as Longing after a more holy Heart, and living a more holy Life.

But I am come now to the last distinguishing Mark of holy Affections that I shall mention.

XII. Gracious and holy Affections have their Exercise and Fruit in Christian Practice.—I mean, they have that Influence and Power upon him who is the Subject of 'em, that they cause that a Practice, which is universally conformed to, and directed by christian Rules, should be the Practice and Business of his Life.

This implies three Things; 1. That his Behaviour or Practice in the World, be universally conformed to, and directed by christian Rules. 2. That he makes a Business of such a holy Practice above all Things; that it be a Business which he is chiefly engaged in, and devoted to, and pursues with highest Earnestness and Diligence: So that he may be said to make this Practice of Religion eminently *his Work and Business*. And 3. That he persists in it to the End of Life: So that it may he said, not only to be his Business at certain Seasons, the Business of Sabbath Days, or certain extraordinary Times, or the Business of a Month, or a Year, or of seven Years, or his Business under certain Circumstances; but the *Business of his Life*; it being that Business which he perseveres in through all Changes, and under all Trials, as long as he lives.

The Necessity of each of these, in all true Christians, is most clearly and fully taught in the Word of God.

1. 'Tis necessary that Men should be universally obedient: ‡ 1 John, iii. 3. &c. *Every Man that hath this Hope*

‡ "He that pretends to Godliness, and turns aside to crooked "Ways, is an Hypocrite: For those that are really godly, do live "in a Way of Obedience; Psal. cxix. 1, 2, 3. *Blessed are the unde-* "*filed in the Way, that walk in the Law of the Lord. They also do* "*no Iniquity*. Luke i. 6. *They were both righteous before God, walk-* "*ing in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless*. But such as "live in Ways of Sin, are Dissemblers; for all such will be rejected "in

Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.—And ye know that he was manifested to take away our Sins, and in

" in the Day of Judgment; Matth. vii. 23, *Depart from me ye that* " *work Iniquity.* The like we have *Luke* xiii. 27. If Men live " in a Way of Disobedience, they don't love God; for Love will " make Men keep God's Commandments; 1 John v. 3. *Here-* " *in is Love, that we keep his Commandments, and his Command-* " *ments are not grievous.* If Men live in a Way of Disobedience, " they have not a Spirit of Faith; for Faith sanctifies Men; " Acts xxvi, 68. *Sanctified by Faith that is in me.* If Men live " in a Way of Disobedience, they are not Christ's Sheep; for his " Sheep hear his Voice; *John* x. 27. Men that live in a Way of Dis- " obedience are not born of God; 1 John iii. 9. *He that is born of* " *God sinneth not.* Men that live in a Way of Disobedience are the " Servants of Sin; John viii. 38. *He that committeth Sin is the Ser-* " *vant of Sin.*———A Course of external Sin is an Evidence of Hy- " pocrisy; whether it be a Sin of Omission or Commission. If Men " live in the Neglect of known Duties, or in the Practice of known " Evils, that will be their Condemnation; let the Sin be what it will; " let it be Prophaneness, Uncleanness, Lying or Injustice.----If Men " allow themselves in Malice, Envy, wanton Thoughts, prophane " Thoughts, that will condemn them; though those Corruptions " don't break out in any scandalous Way. These Thoughts are an " Evidence of a rotten Heart; Tit iii. 3. *We ourselves were sometimes* " *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, liv-* " *ing in Malice, and Envy, hateful, and hating one another.* If a " Man allows himself, tho' he thinks he doth not, in Malice and " Envy, he is an Hypocrite: Tho' his Conscience disallows it, yet " if his Heart allows it, he is no Saint.—Some make Pretences to " Godliness, whereby they do not only deceive others, but (which " is a great deal worse) deceive themselves also: But this will con- " demn them, that they live in a Course of Sin, and so must go " with ungodly Men; Psal. cxxv. 5. *As for such as turn aside unto* " *their crooked Ways, the Lord will lead them forth with the Workers* " *of Iniquity.* If there be a great Change in a Man's Carriage, and " he be reformed in several Particulars, yet if there be one evil " Way, the Man is an ungodly Man; where there is Piety there " is universal Obedience. A Man may have great Infirmities, yet " be a godly Man. So it was with *Lot, David,* and *Peter:* But " if he lives in a Way of Sin, he don't render his Godliness only " suspicious, but it is full Evidence against him. Men that are " godly have Respect to all God's Commandments; *Psal.* cxix. 6. " There be a great many Commands, and if there be one of them " that a Man has not Respect unto, he will be put to Shame another " Day. If a Man lives in one evil Way, he is not subject to God's " Authority; but then he lives in Rebellion; and that will take off " all

in him was no Sin, Whoſoever abideth in him, ſinneth not. Whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him, neither known him. He that doth Righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil. Chap. v. 18. *We know that whoſoever is born of God, ſinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not.* John xv. 14. *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you.* James ii. 10. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* 1 Cor. vi. 9. *Know ye not that the Unrighteous ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters,* &c. *ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* Gal. v. 19, 20. *Now the Works of the Fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſcivicuſneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations,*

" all his Pleas, and at once cut off all his Pretences; and he will " be condemned in the Day of Judgment.—One Way of Sin is Ex- " ception enough againſt the Man's Salvation. Tho' the Sin that " he lives in be but ſmall: Such Perſons won't be guilty of Perjury, " Stealing, Drunkenneſs, Fornication; they look upon them to be " heinous Things, and they are afraid of them; but they do not " much matter it, if they oppreſs a little in a Bargain, if they com- " mend a Thing too much which they are about to ſell, if they break " a Promiſe, if they ſpend the Sabbath unprofitably, if they neglect " ſecret Prayer, if they talk rudely and reproach others; they think " theſe are but ſmall Things: If they can keep clear of great Tranſ- " greſſions, they hope that God will not inſiſt upon ſmall Things. " But indeed all the Commands of God are eſtabliſhed by divine " Authority: A ſmall Shot may kill a Man, as well as a Cannon " Bullet: A ſmall Leak may ſink a Ship. If a Man lives in ſmall " Sins, that ſhews he has no Love to God, no ſincere Care to pleaſe " and honour God. Little Sins are of a damning Nature, as well " as great: If they don't deſerve ſo much Puniſhment as greater, " yet they do deſerve Damnation. There is a Contempt of God " in all Sins; Matth. v. 19. *He that ſhall break one of the leaſt of " theſe Commands, and ſhall teach Men ſo, ſhall be called the leaſt in " the Kingdom of God.* Prov. xix. 16. *He that keepeth the Command- " ment, keepeth his own Soul; but he that deſpiſeth his Way, ſhall die.* " If a Man ſays, this is a great Command, and ſo lays Weight on " it, and another is a little Commandment, and ſo don't regard it, " but will allow himſelf to break it, he is in a periſhing Condition." *Stoddard*'s Way to know Sincerity and Hypocriſy.

lations, Wrath, Strife, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revellings, and ſuch like: Of the which I tell you before, as I have alſo told you in Time paſt, that they which do ſuch Things, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God. Which is as much as to ſay, they that do any Sort of Wickedneſs. Job xxxiv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *Is not Deſtruction to the Wicked, and a ſtrange Puniſhment to the Workers of Iniquity? Doth not he ſee my Ways, and count all my Steps? Let me be weighed in an even Ballance, that God may know my Integrity. If my Step hath turned out of the Way, and mine Heart walked after mine Eyes, and if any Blot hath cleaved to mine Hands,* &c. Ezek. xxxiii. 15. *If he walk in the Statutes of Life, without committing Iniquity, he ſhall ſurely live.* If one Member only be corrupt, and we don't cut it off, it will carry the whole Body to Hell; *Matth.* v. 29, 30. *Saul* was commanded to ſlay all God's Enemies, the *Amalekites*; and he ſlew all but *Agag*, and the ſaving him alive proved his Ruin. *Caleb* and *Joſhua* enter'd into God's promis'd Reſt, becauſe they *wholly* followed the Lord; *Numb.* xiv. 24, and xxxii. 11, 12. *Deut.* i. 36. *Joſh.* xiv. 6, 8, 9, 14. *Naaman*'s Hypocriſy appeared in that, however he ſeem'd to be greatly affected with Gratitude to God for healing his Leproſy, and engag'd to ſerve him, yet in one Thing he deſired to be excuſed. And *Herod*, tho' he feared *John*, and obſerved him, and heard him gladly, and did many Things; yet was condemned, in that in one Thing he would not hearken to him, even in parting with his beloved *Herodias*. So that it is neceſſary that Men ſhould part with their deareſt Iniquities, which are as their right Hand and right Eyes, Sins that moſt eaſily beſet them, and which they are moſt expoſed to by their natural Inclinations, evil Cuſtoms, or particular Circumſtances, as well as others. As *Joſeph* would not make known himſelf to his Brethren, who had ſold him, 'till *Benjamin*, the beloved Child of the Family, that was moſt hardly parted with, was delivered up; no more will Chriſt reveal his Love to us, 'till

we

we part with our deareſt Luſts, and 'till we are brought to comply with the moſt difficult Duties, and thoſe that we have the greateſt Averſion to.

And it is of Importance, that it ſhould be obſerved, that in order to a Man's being truly ſaid to be univerſally obedient, his Obedience muſt not only conſiſt in *Negatives*, or in univerſally avoiding wicked Practices, conſiſting in Sins of Commiſſion; but he muſt alſo be univerſal in the *Poſitives* of Religion. Sins of Omiſſion are as much Breaches of God's Commands, as Sins of Commiſſion. Chriſt, in *Matth.* xxv. repreſents thoſe on the left Hand, as being condemned and curſed to everlaſting Fire, for Sins of Omiſſion, *I was an hungred and ye gave me no Meat*, &c. A Man therefore can't be ſaid to be univerſally obedient, and of a chriſtian Converſation, only becauſe he is no Thief, nor Oppreſſor, nor fraudulent Perſon, nor Drunkard, nor Tavern-haunter, nor Whore-Maſter, nor Rioter, nor Night-walker, nor unclean, nor profane in his Language, nor Slanderer, nor Liar, nor Furious, nor Malicious, nor Reviler: He is falſely ſaid to be of a Converſation that becomes the Goſpel, who goes thus far and no farther; but in order to this, it is neceſſary that he ſhould alſo be of a ſerious, religious, devout, humble, meek, forgiving, peaceful, reſpectful, condeſcending, benevolent, merciful, charitable and beneficent Walk and Converſation. Without ſuch Things as theſe, he don't obey the Laws of Chriſt, and Laws that he and his Apoſtles did abundantly inſiſt on, as of greateſt Importance and Neceſſity.

2. In order to Men's being true Chriſtians, it is neceſſary that they proſecute the Buſineſs of Religion, and the Service of God with great Earneſtneſs and Diligence, as the Work which they devote themſelves to, and make the main Buſineſs of their Lives. All Chriſt's *peculiar People*, not only do good Works, but are *zealous of good Works*; Tit. ii. 14. No Man can do the Service of two Maſters at once. They that are God's true Servants, do

give

give up themſelves to his Service, and make it as it were their whole Work, therein employing their whole Hearts, and the chief of their Strength; Phil. iii. 13. *This one Thing I do.* Chriſtians in their effectual Calling, are not called to Idleneſs, but to Labour in God's Vineyard, and ſpend their Day in doing a great and laborious Service. All true Chriſtians comply with this Call (as is implied in its being an effectual Call) and do the Work of Chriſtians; which is every where in the new Teſtament compared to thoſe Exerciſes, wherein Men are wont to exert their Strength, with the greateſt Earneſtneſs, as Running, Wreſtling, Fighting. All true Chriſtians are good and faithful Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt, and *fight the good Fight of Faith:* For none but thoſe who do ſo, do ever *lay hold on eternal Life.* Thoſe who *fight as thoſe who beat the Air*, never win the Crown of Victory. *They that run in a Race, run all; but one wins the Prize*; and they that are ſlack and negligent in their Courſe, do not *ſo run, as that they may obtain.* The Kingdom of Heaven is not to be taken but by Violence. Without Earneſtneſs there is no getting along, in that narrow Way that leads to Life; and ſo no arriving at that State of glorious Life and Happineſs which it leads to. Without earneſt Labour, there is no aſcending the ſteep and high Hill of *Zion*; and ſo no arriving at the heavenly City on the Top of it. Without a conſtant Laborioufneſs, there is no ſtemming the ſwift Stream in which we ſwim, ſo as ever to come to that Fountain of Water of Life, that is at the Head of it. There is need that we ſhould *watch and pray always*, in order to our *eſcaping thoſe* dreadful *Things*, that are coming on the Ungodly, and our *being counted worthy to ſtand before the Son of Man.* There is need of our *putting on the whole Armour of God, and doing all to ſtand*, in order to our avoiding a total Overthrow, and being utterly deſtroyed by the *fiery Darts of the Devil.* There is need that we ſhould *forget the Things that are behind*, and *be reaching forth to the Things that are be-*

fore, and preſſing towards the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling of God, in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, in order to our obtaining that Prize. Slothfulneſs in the Service of God, in his profeſſed Servants, is as damning as open Rebellion: For the *ſlothful Servant*, is a *wicked Servant*, and ſhall be caſt into outer Darkneſs, among God's open Enemies; *Matth.* xxv. 26, 28. They that are *ſlothful*, are not *Followers of them, who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* Heb. vi. 11, 12. *And we deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame Diligence, to the full Aſſurance of Hope, unto the End; that ye be not ſlothful; but Followers of them, who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promiſes.* And all they who follow *that Cloud of Witneſſes* that are gone before to Heaven, do *lay aſide every Weight, and the Sin that eaſily beſets them, and do run with Patience the Race that is ſet before them*; Heb. xii. 1. That true Faith, by which Perſons rely on the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the Work that he hath done for them, and do truly feed and live upon him, is evermore accompanied with ſuch a Spirit of Earneſtneſs in the chriſtian Work and Courſe. Which was typified of old, by the Manner of the Children of *Iſrael*'s feeding on the Paſchal Lamb: Who were directed to eat it, as thoſe that were in Haſte, with their Loins girded, their Shoes on their Feet, and Staff in their Hand; Exod. xii. 11. *And thus ſhall ye eat it; with your Loins girded, your Shoes on your Feet, and your Staff in your Hand, and ye ſhall eat it in Haſte: It is the Lord's Paſſover.*

3. Every true Chriſtian perſeveres in this Way of univerſal Obedience, and diligent and earneſt Service of God, thro' all the various Kinds of Trials that he meets with, to the End of Life. That all true Saints, all thoſe that do obtain eternal Life, do thus perſevere in the Practice of Religion, and the Service of God, is a Doctrine ſo abundantly taught in the Scripture, that particularly to rehearſe all the Texts which imply it, would be endleſs. I ſhall content myſelf with referring

ferring to ſome in the Margin. *

But *that* in Perſeverance in Obedience, which is chiefly inſiſted on in the Scripture, as a ſpecial Note of the Truth of Grace, is the Continuance of Profeſſors in the Practice of their Duty, and being ſtedfaſt in an holy Walk, through the various *Trials* that they meet with.

By *Trials*, here I mean, thoſe Things that occur, and that a Profeſſor meets with in his Courſe, that do eſpecially render his Continuance in his Duty, and Faithfulneſs to God, difficult to Nature. Theſe Things are from Time to Time called in Scripture by the Name of *Trials*, or *Temptations* (which are Words of the ſame Signification) Theſe are of various Kinds: There are many Things that render Perſons Continuance in the Way of their Duty difficult, by their Tendency to cheriſh and foment, or to ſtir up and provoke their Luſts and Corruptions. Many Things make it hard to continue in the Way of Duty, by their being of an alluring Nature, and having a Tendency to entice Perſons to Sin; or by their Tendency to take off Reſtraints, and embolden 'em in Iniquity. Other Things are Trials of the Soundneſs and Steadfaſtneſs of Profeſſors, by their Tendency to make their Duty appear terrible to them, and ſo to affright and drive them from it: Such as the Sufferings which their Duty will expoſe them to; Pain, Ill-will, Contempt, and Reproach, or Loſs of outward Poſſeſſions and Comforts. If Perſons, after they have made a Profeſſion of Religion, live any conſiderable Time in this World, which is ſo full of Changes, and

* *Deut.* v. 29. *Deut.* xxxii. 18, 19, 20. 1 *Chron.* xxviii. 9. *Pſal.* lxxviii. 7, 8, 10, 11, 35, 36, 37, 41, 42, 56, *&c. Pſal.* cvi. 3, 12, 13, 14, 15. *Pſal.* cxxv. 4, 5. *Prov.* xxvi. 11. *Iſai.* lxiv. 5. *Jer.* xvii. 13. *Ezek.* iii. 20. *and* xviii. 24. *and* xxxiii. 12, 13. *Matth.* x. 22. *Matth.* xiii. 4,---8, with Verſes 19,---23. *Matth.* xxv. 8. *Matth.* xxiv. 12, 13. *Luke* ix. 62. *Chap.* xii. 35. *&c. Chap.* xxii. 28. *Chap.* xvii. 32. *John* viii. 30. 31. *Chap.* xv. 6, 7, 8, 10, 16. *Rom.* ii 7. *Chap.* xi. 22. *Col.* i. 22, 23. *Heb.* iii. 6, 12, 14. *Chap.* vi. 11, 12. *Chap.* x. 35, *&c. James* i. 25. *Rev.* ii. 13, 26. *Chap.* iii. 10. 1 *Tim.* ii. 15. 2. *Tim.* iv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

ſo full of Evil, it can't be otherwiſe, than that they ſhould meet with many Trials of their Sincerity and Steadfaſtneſs. And beſides, 'tis God's Manner, in his Providence, to bring Trials on his profeſſing Friends and Servants deſignedly, that he may manifeſt them, and may exhibit ſufficient Matter of Conviction of the State which they are in, to their own Conſciences; and often-times to the World. As appears by innumerable Scriptures; ſome are refer'd to in the Margin, §

True Saints may be guilty of ſome Kinds and Degrees of Backſliding, and may be foil'd by particular Temptations, and may fall into Sin, yea great Sins: But they can never fall away ſo, as to grow weary of Religion, and the Service of God, and habitually to diſlike it and neglect it; either on its own Account, or on Account of the Difficulties that attend it: As is evident by *Gal.* vi. 9. *Rom.* ii. 7. *Heb.* x. 36. *Iſai.* xliii. 22. *Mal.* i. 13. They can never backſlide, ſo as to continue no longer in a *Way* of univerſal Obedience; or ſo, that it ſhall ceaſe to be their *Manner*, to obſerve all the Rules of Chriſtianity, and do all Duties required, even the moſt difficult, and in the moſt difficult Circumſtances. * This is

§ *Gen.* xxii. 1. *Exod.* xv. 25. *Chap.* xvi. 4. *Deut.* viii. 2, 15, 16. *Chap.* xiii. 3. *Judges* ii. 22. *Chap.* iii. 1, 4. *Job.* xxiii. 10. *Pſal.* lxvi. 10, 11. *Ezek.* iii. 20. *Dan.* xii. 10. *Zech.* xiii. 9. *Matth.* viii. 19, 20. *Chap.* xviii. 21, 22. *Luke* i. 35. 1 *Cor.* xi. 19. 2 *Cor.* viii. 8. *Jam.* i. 12. 1 *Pet.* iv. 12. 1 *John* ii. 19. *Heb.* xi. 17. *Rev.* iii. 10,

* "One Way of Sin is Exception enough againſt Men's Salvation, though their Temptations be great. Some Perſons delight "in Iniquity; they take Pleaſure in Rudeneſs, and intemperate "Practices: But there be others, that don't delight in Sin; when "they can handſomely avoid it, they don't chuſe it; except they "be under ſome great Neceſſity, they will not do it. They are "afraid to ſin; they think it is dangerous, and have ſome Care to "avoid it: But ſometimes they force themſelves to ſin; they are re"duced to Difficulties, and can't tell how well to avoid it; it is a "dangerous Thing not to do it. If *Naaman* don't bow himſelf in "the Houſe of *Rimmon*, the King will be in a Rage with him, take "away his Office, it may be take away his Life, and ſo he com"plies; 2 *Kings* v. 18.—So *Jeroboam* forced himſelf to ſet up the Calves

is abundantly manifeſt by the Things that have been obſerved already. Nor can they ever fall away ſo, as habitually to be more engaged in other Things, than in the Buſineſs of Religion; or ſo that it ſhould become their Way and Manner to ſerve ſomething elſe more than God; or ſo as ſtatedly to ſerve God, with ſuch Earneſtneſs and Diligence, as ſtill to be habitually devoted and given up to the Buſineſs of Religion. Unleſs thoſe Words of Chriſt can fall to the Ground, *Ye cannot ſerve two Maſters*; and thoſe of the Apoſtle, *He that will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God*; and unleſs a Saint can change his God, and yet be a true Saint. Nor can a true Saint ever fall away ſo, that it ſhall come to this, that ordinarily there ſhall be no remarkable Difference in his Walk and Behaviour ſince his Converſion, from what was before. They that are truly converted are new Men, new Creatures; new, not only within, but without; they are ſanctified throughout, in Spirit, Soul and Body; old Things are paſs'd away, all Things are become new; they have new Hearts,

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' Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*: He thought that if the People went up ' to *Jeruſalem* to worſhip, they would return to *Rehoboam*, and kill ' him; therefore he muſt think of ſome Expedient to deliver himſelf in this Strait; 1 *Kings* xii. 27, 28.—He was driven by appearing Neceſſity to take this wicked Courſe. So the ſtony Ground ' Hearers were willing to retain the Profeſſion of the true Religion; ' but the Caſe was ſuch, that they thought they could not well do ' it; Matth xiii. 21. *When Tribulation or Perſecution ariſeth becauſe ' of the Word, by and by he is offended.*—So *Achan* and *Gahazi* had ' ſingular Opportunities to get an Eſtate; if they live twenty Years ' they are not like to have ſuch an Advantage; and they force themſelves to borrow a Point, and break the Law of God. They lay ' a Neceſſity on Eſtate and Liberty and Life, but not upon Obedience. If a Man be willing to ſerve God in ordinary Caſes, but ' excuſe himſelf when there be great Difficulties, he is not godly. ' It is a ſmall Matter to ſerve God, when Men have no Temptation; ' but *Lot* was holy in *Sodom*, *Noah* was righteous in the old World. ' Temptations try Men, but they don't force Men to ſin: And ' Grace will eſtabliſh the Heart in a Day of Temptation. They ' are bleſſed that do endure Temptation, *Jam.* i. 12. But they are ' curſed that fall away in a Day of Temptation." *Stoddard*'s Way to know Sincerity and Hypocriſy.

Hearts, and new Eyes, new Ears, new Tongues, new Hands, new Feet; *i. e.* a new Converſation and Practice; and they walk in Newneſs of Life, and continue to do ſo to the End of Life. And they that fall away, and ceaſe viſibly to do ſo, 'tis a Sign they never were riſen with Chriſt. * And eſpecially when Men's Opinion of their being converted, and ſo in a ſafe Eſtate, is the very Cauſe of their coming to this, it is a moſt evident Sign of their Hypocriſy. † And that, whether their Falling away be into their former Sins, or into ſome new Kind of Wickedneſs; having the Corruption of Nature only turned into a new Channel, inſtead of it's being mortified. As when Perſons that think themſelves converted, tho' they do not return to former Prophaneneſs

* "Hence we learn what Verdict to paſs and give in, concerning "thoſe Men that decay and fall off from the Lord. They never "had Oil in the Veſſel; never had a Dram of Grace in their "Heart. Thus 1 John ii. 9. *If they had been of us, they would no "Doubt have continued with us.* It ſeems they were ſuch Men, "which were ſo eminent and excellent, as that there were no Brands "nor Marks upon them, to give Notice to the Churches, that they "were mark'd out for Apoſtacy; but were only diſcovered to be un-"found, by their Apoſtacy; and this was Argument good enough."—*Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. p. 226.

† "When a Man's Riſing is the Cauſe of his Fall, or ſeals a "Man up in his Fall, or at leaſt the Cauſe through his Corruption. "*Ex. Gr.* Time was, a Man lived a looſe, careleſs, carnal Life; "by the Miniſtry of ſome Word, or Reading of ſome Book, or "Speaking with ſome Friend, he comes to be convinced of his "Miſery and woful Condition, and ſee no Good nor Grace in him-"ſelf; he hath been even hitherto deceived: At laſt he comes to get "ſome Light, ſome Taſte, ſome Sorrows, ſome Heart, to uſe the "Means, ſome Comfort and Mercy and Hope of Life: And when "it is thus with him, now he falls; He grows full and falls; and "this Riſing is the Cauſe of his Fall; his Light is Darkneſs and "Death to him; and grows to a Form of Knowledge; his Riſing "makes him fall to Formality, and then to Prophaneneſs; and ſo "his Taſting ſatisfies him; his Sorrows empty his Heart of Sorrow "for Sin; and his Sorrows for his Falls harden his Heart in his "Falls; and all the Means of recovering him harden him.—Look "as it is in Diſeaſes; if the Phyſic and Meat turns to be Poiſon, "then there is no Hope of Recovery; a Man is ſick to Death now. "The Saint's little Meaſure makes him forget what is behind."—*Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. p. 226.

neſs and Lewdneſs; yet from the high Opinion they have of their Experiences, Graces and Privileges, gradually ſettle more and more in a ſelf-righteous and ſpiritually proud Temper of Mind, and in ſuch a Manner of Behaviour and Converſation, as naturally ariſes therefrom. When it is thus with Men, however far they may ſeem to be from their former evil Practices, this alone is enough to condemn them, and may render their laſt State far worſe than the firſt. For this ſeems to be the very Caſe of the *Jews* of that Generation that Chriſt ſpeaks of, *Matth.* xii. 43, 44, 45. who having been awakened by *John the Baptiſt*'s Preaching, and brought to a Reformation of their former licentious Courſes, whereby the unclean Spirit was as it were turned out, and the Houſe ſwept and garniſh'd; yet being *empty* of God and of Grace, became full of themſelves; and were exalted in an exceeding high Opinion of their own Righteouſneſs and eminent Holineſs, and became habituated to an anſwerably Self-exalting Behaviour; ſo changing the Sins of Publicans and Harlots, for thoſe of the Phariſees; and in the Iſſue, had ſeven Devils, worſe than the firſt.

Thus I have explain'd what Exerciſe and Fruit I mean, when I ſay, that gracious Affections have their Exerciſe and Fruit in chriſtian Practice.

The Reaſon why gracious Affections have ſuch a Tendency and Effect, appears from many Things that have already been obſerved, in the preceeding Parts of this Diſcourſe.

The Reaſon of it appears from this, that *gracious Affections do ariſe from thoſe Operations and Influences which are ſpiritual*, and that the inward Principle from whence they flow, is ſomething *divine*, a Communication of God, a Participation of the divine Nature, Chriſt living in the Heart, the holy Spirit dwelling there, in Union with the Faculties of the Soul, as an internal vital Principle, exerting his own proper Nature, in the Exerciſe of thoſe Faculties. This is ſufficient to ſhew us why true Grace

ſhould

ſhould have ſuch Activity, Power and Efficacy. No Wonder that which is divine, is powerful and effectual; for it has Omnipotence on it's Side. If God dwells in the Heart, and be vitally united to it, he will ſhew that he is a God by the Efficacy of his Operation. Chriſt is not in the Heart of a Saint, as in a Sepulchre, or as a dead Saviour, that does nothing; but as in his Temple, and as one that is alive from the Dead. For in the Heart where Chriſt ſavingly is, there he lives and exerts himſelf after the Power of that endleſs Life, that he received at his Reſurrection. Thus every Saint that is the Subject of the Benefit of Chriſt's Sufferings, is made to know and experience the Power of his Reſurrection. The Spirit of Chriſt, which is the immediate Spring of Grace in the Heart, is all Life, all Power, all Act; 2 *Cor.* ii. 4. *In Demonſtration of the Spirit, and of Power.* 1 Theſ. i. 5. *Our Goſpel came not unto you in Word only, but alſo in Power, and in the Holy Ghoſt.* 1 Cor. iv. 20 *The Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power.* Hence ſaving Affections, tho' oftentimes they don't make ſo great a Noiſe and Show as others; yet have in them a ſecret Solidity, Life and Strength, whereby they take hold of, and carry away the Heart, leading it into a Kind of Captivity, 2 *Cor.* x. 5. gaining a full and ſtedfaſt Determination of the Will for God and Holineſs; Pſal. cx. 3. *Thy People ſhall be willing in the Day of thy Power.* And thus it is that holy Affections have a governing Power in the Courſe of a Man's Life. A Statue may look very much like a real Man, and a beautiful Man; yea it may have, in it's Appearance to the Eye, the Reſemblance of a very lively, ſtrong and active Man; but yet an inward Principle of Life and Strength is wanting; and therefore it does nothing, it brings nothing to paſs, there is no Action or Operation to anſwer the Shew. Falſe Diſcoveries and Affections don't go deep enough, to reach and govern the Spring of Men's Actions and Practice. The Seed in ſtony Ground had not Deepneſs of Earth, and

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the Root did not go deep enough to bring forth Fruit. But gracious Affections go to the very Bottom of the Heart, and take hold of the very inmoſt Springs of Life and Activity. Herein chiefly appears the Power of true Godlineſs, *viz.* in it's being effectual in Practice. And the Efficacy of Godlineſs in this Reſpect, is what the Apoſtle has Reſpect to, when he ſpeaks of the Power of Godlineſs, 2 *Tim.* iii. 5. as is very plain; for he there is particularly declaring, how ſome Profeſſors of Religion would notoriouſly fail in the Practice of it; and then in the 5th Verſe obſerves, that in being thus of an unholy Practice, they deny the Power of Godlineſs, tho' they have the Form of it. Indeed the Power of Godlineſs is exerted in the firſt Place within the Soul, in the ſenſible, lively Exerciſe of gracious Affections there. Yet the principal Evidence of this Power of Godlineſs, is in thoſe Exerciſes of holy Affections that are practical, and in their being practical; in conquering the Will, and conquering the Luſts and Corruptions of Men, and carrying Men on in the Way of Holineſs, thro' all Temptation, Difficulty and Oppoſition.

Again, The Reaſon why gracious Affections have their Exerciſe and Effect in chriſtian Practice, appears from this (which has alſo been before obſerved) that *the firſt objective Ground of gracious Affections, is the tranſcendently excellent and amiable Nature of divine Things, as they are in themſelves, and not any conceived Relation they bear to Self, or Self-Intereſt.* This ſhews why holy Affections will cauſe Men to be holy in their Practice univerſally. What makes Men partial in Religion is, that they ſeek themſelves, and not God, in their Religion, and cloſe with Religion, not for its own excellent Nature, but only to ſerve a Turn. He that cloſes with Religion only to ſerve a Turn, will cloſe with no more of it than he imagines ſerves that Turn. But he that cloſes with Religion for its own excellent and lovely Nature, cloſes with all that has that Nature: He that

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embraces Religion for its own Sake, embraces the Whole of Religion. This alſo ſhews why gracious Affections will cauſe Men to practice Religion perſeveringly, and at all Times. Religion may alter greatly in Proceſs of Time, as to its Conſiſtence with Men's private Intereſt, in many Reſpects; and therefore he that complies with it, only from ſelfiſh Views, is liable, in Change of Times, to forſake it: But the excellent Nature of Religion, as it is in itſelf, is invariable; it is always the ſame, at all Times, and thro' all Changes; it never alters in any Reſpect.

The Reaſon why gracious Affections iſſue in holy Practice, alſo further appears from the Kind of Excellency of divine Things, that it has been obſerved is the Foundation of all holy Affection, *viz. their moral Excellency, or the Beauty of their Holineſs.* No wonder that a Love to Holineſs, for Holineſs Sake, inclines Perſons to practice Holineſs, and to practice every Thing that is holy. Seeing Holineſs is the main Thing that excites, draws and governs all gracious Affections, no wonder that all ſuch Affections tend to Holineſs. That which Men love, they deſire to have and to be united to, and poſſeſſed of. That Beauty which Men delight in, they deſire to be adorned with. Thoſe Acts which Men delight in, they neceſſarily incline to do.

And what has been obſerved of that *divine Teaching and Leading of the Spirit of God*, which there is in gracious Affections, ſhews the Reaſon of this Tendency of ſuch Affections to an univerſally holy Practice. For as has been obſerved, the Spirit of God in this his divine Teaching and Leading, gives the Soul a natural Reliſh of the Sweetneſs of that which is holy, and of every Thing that is holy, ſo far as it comes in View, and excites a Diſreliſh and Diſguſt of every Thing that is unholy.

The ſame alſo appears from what has been obſerved of the Nature of that *ſpiritual Knowledge*, which is the Foundation of all holy Affection, as conſiſting in a

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Senſe and View of that Excellency in divine Things, which is ſupream and tranſcendent. For hereby theſe Things appear above all others, worthy to be choſen and adhered to. By the Sight of the tranſcendant Glory of Chriſt, true Chriſtians ſee him worthy to be followed; and ſo are powerfully drawn after him: They ſee him worthy that they ſhould forſake all for him: By the Sight of that ſuperlative Amiableneſs, they are thoroughly diſpoſed to be ſubject to him, and engaged to labour with Earneſtneſs and Activity in his Service, and made willing to go thro' all Difficulties for his Sake. And 'tis the Diſcovery of this divine Excellency of Chriſt, that makes them conſtant to him: For it makes a deep Impreſſion upon their Minds, that they cannot forget him; and they will follow him whitherſoever he goes, and it is in vain for any to endeavour to draw them away from him.

The Reaſon of this practical Tendency and Iſſue of gracious Affections, further appears, from what has been obſerved of ſuch Affections being *attended with a thorough Conviction of the Judgment, of the Reality and Certainty of divine Things.* No wonder that they who were never thoroughly convinced that there is any Reality in the Things of Religion, will never be at the Labour and Trouble of ſuch an earneſt, univerſal and perſevering Practice of Religion, thro' all Difficulties, Self-denials and Sufferings, in a Dependance on that, which they are not convinced of. But on the other Hand, they who are thoroughly convinced of the certain Truth of thoſe Things, muſt needs be govern'd by them in their Practice; for the Things revealed in the Word of God are ſo great, and ſo infinitely more important, than all other Things, that it is inconſiſtent with the human Nature, that a Man ſhould fully believe the Truth of them, and not be influenced by them above all Things, in his Practice.

Again, The Reaſon of this Expreſſion and Effect of holy Affections in the Practice, appears from what has been

been obſerved of *a Change of Nature, accompanying ſuch Affections.* Without a Change of Nature, Men's Practice will not be thoroughly changed. 'Till the Tree be made good, the Fruit will not be good. Men don't gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thiſtles. The Swine may be waſhed, and appear clean for a little while, but yet, without a Change of Nature, he will ſtill wallow in the Mire. Nature is a more powerful Principle of Action, than any Thing that oppoſes it: Tho' it may be violently reſtrain'd for a while, it will finally overcome that which reſtrains it: 'Tis like the Stream of a River, it may be ſtopp'd a while with a Dam, but if nothing be done to dry the Fountain, it won't be ſtop'd always: It will have a Courſe, either in its old Channel, or a new one. Nature is a Thing more conſtant and permanent, than any of thoſe Things that are the Foundation of carnal Men's Reformation and Righteouſneſs. When a natural Man denies his Luſt, and lives a ſtrict, religious Life, and ſeems humble, painful and earneſt in Religion, 'tis not natural, 'tis all a Force againſt Nature; as when a Stone is violently thrown upwards; but that Force will be gradually ſpent; yet Nature will remain in its full Strength, and ſo prevails again, and the Stone returns downwards. As long as corrupt Nature is not mortified, but the Principle left whole in a Man, 'tis a vain Thing to expect that it ſhould not govern. But if the old Nature be indeed mortified, and a new and heavenly Nature infuſed; then may it well be expected, that Men will walk in Newneſs of Life, and continue to do ſo to the End of their Days.

The Reaſon of this practical Exerciſe and Effect of holy Affections, may alſo be partly ſeen, from what has been ſaid of that *Spirit of Humility, which attends them.* Humility is that wherein a Spirit of Obedience does much conſiſt. A proud Spirit is a rebellious Spirit, but a humble Spirit is a yieldable, ſubject, obediential Spirit. We ſee among Men, that the Servant who is of a haughty Spirit, is not apt in every Thing to be ſubmiſſive and obedient

obedient to the Will of his Maſter; but it is otherwiſe with that Servant who is of a lowly Spirit.

And the *Lamblike, Dovelike Spirit*, that has been ſpoken of, which accompanies all gracious Affections, fulfills (as the Apoſtle obſerves, Rom. xiii, 8, 9, 10. and Gal. v. 14.) all the Duties of the ſecond Table of the Law; wherein Chriſtian Practice does very much conſiſt, and wherein the external Practice of Chriſtianity chiefly conſiſts.

And the Reaſon why gracious Affections are attended with that ſtrict, univerſal and conſtant Obedience which has been ſpoken of, further appears, from what has been obſerved of that *Tenderneſs of Spirit*, which accompanies the Affections of true Saints, cauſing in them ſo quick and lively a Senſe of Pain, through the Preſence of moral Evil, and ſuch a Dread of the Appearance of Evil.

And one great Reaſon why the chriſtian Practice which flows from gracious Affections, is univerſal, and conſtant, and perſevering, appears from what has been obſerved of thoſe Affections themſelves, from whence this Practice flows, being univerſal and conſtant, in all Kinds of holy Exerciſes, and towards all Objects, and in all Circumſtances, and at all Seaſons, *in a beautiful Symmetry and Proportion.*

And much of the Reaſon why holy Affections are expreſſed and manifeſted in ſuch an Earneſtneſs, Activity, and Engagedneſs and Perſeverance in holy Practice, as has been ſpoken of, appears from what has been obſerved, of the ſpiritual Appetite and Longing after further Attainments in Religion, which evermore attends true Affection, and do not decay, but encreaſe, as thoſe Affections increaſe.

Thus we ſee how the Tendency of holy Affections to ſuch a chriſtian Practice as has been explained, appears from each of thoſe Characteriſticks of holy Affection, that have been before ſpoken of.

And this Point may be further illuſtrated and confirmed, if it be conſidered, that the holy Scriptures do abundantly

abundantly place Sincerity and Soundneſs in Religion, in making a full Choice of God as our only Lord and Portion, forſaking all for him, and in a full Determination of the Will for God and Chriſt, on counting the Coſt; in our Hearts cloſing and complying with the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its Difficulties, as it were hating our deareſt earthly Enjoyments, and even our own Lives, for Chriſt; giving up ourſelves, with all that we have, wholly and forever, unto Chriſt, without keeping back any Thing or making any Reſerve; or in one Word, in the great Duty of *Self-denial* for Chriſt; or in denying, *i. e.* as it were diſowning and renouncing ourſelves for him, making ourſelves nothing that he may be all. See the Texts to this Purpoſe referred to in the Margin.* Now ſurely having an Heart to forſake all for Chriſt, tends to actually forſaking all for him, ſo far as there is Occaſion, and we have the Trial. And having an Heart to deny ourſelves for Chriſt, tends to a denying ourſelves in Deed, when Chriſt and Self-Intereſt ſtand in competition. A giving up ourſelves, with all that we have in our Hearts, without making any Reſerve there, tends to our behaving ourſelves univerſally as his, as ſubject to his Will, and devoted to his Ends. Our Hearts entirely cloſing with the Religion of Jeſus, with all that belongs to it, and as attended with all its Difficulties, upon a deliberate counting the Coſt, tends to an univerſal cloſing with the ſame in Act and Deed, and actually going through all the Difficulties that we meet with in the Way

* *Matth.* v. 29, 30. *Matth.* 6. 24. *Chap.* 8. 19,—22. *Chap.* 4. 18,—22. *Chap.* 10. 37, 38, 39. *Chap.* 13. 44, 45, 46. *Chap.* 16. 24, 25, 26. *Chap.* 18. 8, 9. *Chap.* 19. 21, 27,—29. *Luke* 5. 27, 28. *Luke* 10, 42. *Chap.* 12. 33, 34. *Chap.* 14. 16,—20, 25,—33, *Chap.* 16. 13. *Acts* 4. 34, 35. with *Chap.* 5. 1.—11. *Rom.* 6. 3,—8. *Gal.* 2. 20. *Chap.* 6. 14. *Philip.* 3. 7,—13. *Jam.* 1. 8, 9, 10. *Chap.* 4. 4. 1 *John* 2. 15. *Rev.* 14. 4. *Gen.* 12. 1,—4. with *Heb.* 11. 8, 9, 10. *Gen.* 22. 12. and *Heb.* 11. 17. *Heb.* 11. 24,—27. *Deut.* 13. 6. and *Chap.* 33. 9. *Ruth* 1. 6,—16. with *Pſal.* 45. 10, 11. and 2 *Sam.* 15. 19,—22. *Pſal.* 73. 25. *Pſal* 16, 5, 6. *Lam.* 3. 24. *Jer.* 10. 16.

Way of Religion, and so holding out with Patience and Perseverance.

The Tendency of Grace in the Heart to holy Practice, is very direct, and the Connection most natural close and necessary. True Grace is not an unactive Thing; there is nothing in Heaven or Earth of a more active Nature; for 'tis Life itself, and the most active Kind of Life, even spiritual and divine Life. 'Tis no barren Thing; there is nothing in the Universe that in its Nature has a greater Tendency to Fruit. Godliness in the Heart has as direct Relation to Practice, as a Fountain has to a Stream, or as the luminous Nature of the Sun has to Beams sent forth, or as Life has to Breathing, or the Beating of the Pulse, or any other vital Act; or as a Habit or Principle of Action has to Action; for 'tis the very Nature and Notion of Grace, that it is a Principle of holy Action or Practice. Regeneration, which is that Work of God in which Grace is infused, has a direct Relation to Practice; for it is the very End of it, with a View to which the whole Work is wrought: All is calculated and framed, in this mighty and manifold Change in the Soul, so as directly to tend to this End: Eph. ii. 10. *For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good Works.* Yea 'tis the very End of the Redemption of Christ; Tit. ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* 2 Cor. v. 15. *He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died, and rose again.* Heb. ix. 14. *How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered up himself without Spot to God, purge your Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God?* Col. i. 21, 22. *And you that were sometimes alienated, and Enemies in your Minds by wicked Works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the Body of his Flesh, through Death, to present you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his Sight.* 1 Pet. i. 18. *For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible Things,*

Things, as Silver and Gold, from your vain Converſation.—Luke i. 74, 75. *That he would grant us, that we being delivered out of the Hands of our Enemies, might ſerve him without Fear, in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs before him, all the Days of our Lives.* God often ſpeaks of holy Practice, as the End of that great typical Redemption from *Egyptian* Bondage; as Exod. iv. 23. *Let my Son go, that he may ſerve me.* So Chap. iv. 23. and vii. 16. and viii. 1, 20. and ix. 1. 13. and x. 3. And this is alſo declared to be the End of Election; John xv. 13. *Ye have not choſen me; but I have choſen you, and ordained you, that you go and bring forth Fruit, and that your Fruit ſhould remain.* Eph. i. 4. *According as he hath choſen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we ſhould be holy, and without Blame before him, in Love.* Chap ii. 10. *Created unto good Works; which God hath fore-ordained that we ſhould walk in them.* Holy Practice is as much the End of all that God does about his Saints, as Fruit is the End of all the Huſbandman does about the Growth of his Field or Vineyard: As the Matter is often repreſented in Scripture; Matth. iii. 10. Chap. xiii. 8, 23, 24,—30, 38. Chap. xxi. 19, 33, 34. Luke xiii. 6. John xv. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8. 1 Cor. iii. 9. Heb. vi. 7, 8. Iſai. v. 1,—8. Cant. viii. 11, 12. Iſai. xxvii. 2, 3. † And therefore every Thing in a true Chriſtian is calculated to reach this End. This Fruit of holy Practice, is what every Grace, and every Diſcovery, and every individual Thing,

† "To profeſs to know much is eaſy; but to bring your Affections into Subjection, to wreſtle with Luſts, to croſs your Wills and yourſelves, upon every Occaſion, this is hard. The Lord looketh, that in our Lives we ſhould be ſerviceable to him, and uſeful to Men. That which is within, the Lord and our Brethren are never the better for it: but the outward Obedience, flowing thence, glorifieth God and does good to Men The Lord will have this done. What elſe is the End of our planting and watering, but that the Trees may be filled with Sap? And what is the End of that Sap, but that the Trees may bring forth Fruit? What careth the Huſbandman for Leaves and barren Trees?" Dr. *Preſton* of the Church's Carriage.

Thing, which belongs to christian Experience, has a direct Tendency to. ‡

The constant and indissoluble Connection that there is between a christian Principle and Profession in the true Saints, and the Fruit of holy Practice in their Lives, was typified of old in the Frame of the golden Candlestick in the Temple. 'Tis beyond Doubt that that golden Candlestick, with its seven Branches and seven Lamps, was a Type of the Church of Christ. The Holy Ghost himself, has been pleased to put that Matter out of Doubt, by representing his Church by such a golden Candlestick, with seven Lamps, in the fourth Chapter of *Zechariah*, and representing the seven Churches of *Asia*, by seven golden Candlesticks, in the first Chapter of the *Revelation*. That golden Candlestick

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* "What is the End of every Grace, but to mollify the Heart, "and make it pliable to some Command or other? Look how many "Commandments, so many Graces there are in Virtue and Efficacy, "although not so many several Names are given them. The End of "every such Grace is to make us obedient: As the End of Tempe- "rance is Chastity, to bow the Heart to these Commands, *Be ye* "*sober*, &c. *not in Chambering and Wantonness*, &c. When the "Lord commandeth us not to be angry with our Brother, the End "of Meekness, and why the Lord infuseth it, is to keep us from "unadvised rash Anger. So Faith, the End of it is to take Jesus "Christ, to make us obedient to the Command of the Gospel, "which commands us to believe in him. So as all Graces do join "together, but to frame and fashion the Soul to Obedience; then "so much Obedience as is in your Lives, so much Grace in your "Hearts, and no more. Therefore ask your Hearts, how subject "you are to the Lord in your Lives? It was the Counsel that *Francis* "*Spira* gave to them about him, saith he, Learn all of me to take "Heed of severing Faith and Obedience; I taught Justification by "Faith, but neglected Obedience; and therefore is this befallen me. "I have known some godly Men, whose Comfort on their Death- "Beds hath been not from the inward Acts of their Minds, which "apart considered, might be subject to Misapprehensions, but from "the Course of Obedience in their Lives, issuing thence. Let "Christians look to it, that in all their Conversation, as they stand "in every Relation, as Scholars, Tradesmen, Husbands, Wives, "look to this, that when they come to die, they have been subject "in all Things. This will yield Comfort." Dr. *Preston*'s Church Carriage.

ſtick in the Temple was every where, throughout its whole Frame, made with *Knops and Flowers*; Exod. xxv. 31, to the End, and Chap. xxxvii. 17,——24. The Word tranſlated *Knop*, in the Original ſignifies Apple or Pomegranate. There was a *Knop and a Flower, a Knop and a Flower:* Wherever there was a Flower, there was an Apple or Pomegranate with it: The Flower and the Fruit were conſtantly connected, without fail. The Flower contain'd the Principles of the Fruit, and a beautiful promiſing Appearance of it; and it never was a deceitful Appearance: The Principle or Shew of Fruit, had evermore real Fruit attending it, or ſucceeding it. So it is in the Church of Chriſt: There is the Principle of Fruit in Grace in the Heart; and there is an amiable Profeſſion, ſignified by the open Flowers of the Candleſtick; and there is anſwerable Fruit, in holy Practice, conſtantly attending this Principle and Profeſſion. Every Branch of the golden Candleſtick, thus compos'd of golden Apples and Flowers, was crown'd with a burning, ſhining Lamp on the Top of it. For 'tis by this Means that the Saints ſhine as Lights in the World, by making a fair and good Profeſſion of Religion, and having their Profeſſion evermore join'd with anſwerable Fruit in Practice: Agreeable to that of our Saviour, Matth. v. 15, 16. *Neither do Men light a Candle, and put it under a Buſhel, but on a Candleſtick; and it giveth Light unto all that are in the Houſe. Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may* SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, *and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* A fair and beautiful Profeſſion, and golden Fruits accompanying one another, are the amiable Ornaments of the true Church of Chriſt. Therefore we find that Apples and Flowers were not only the Ornaments of the Candleſtick in the Temple, but of the Temple itſelf, which is a Type of the Church; which the Apoſtle tells us, *is the Temple of the living God* See 1 Kings vi. 18. *And the Cedar of the Houſe within, was carved with Knops and open Flowers.* The

Ornaments

Ornaments and Crown of the Pillars, at the Entrance of the Temple, were of the same Sort: They were Lillies and Pomegranates, or Flowers and Fruits mix'd together; 1 Kings vii. 18, 19. So it is with all those that are *as Pillars in the Temple of God, who shall go no more out*, or never be rejected as Intruders; as it is with all true Saints; Rev. iii. 12. *Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.*

Much the same Thing seems to be signified by the Ornaments on the Skirt of the Ephod, the Garment of *Aaron* the high Priest; which were golden Bells and Pomegranates. That these Skirts of *Aaron*'s Garment represent the Church, or the Saints (that are as it were the Garment of Christ) is manifest; for they are evidently so spoken of, Psal. cxxxiii. 1, 2. *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity! It is like the precious Ointment upon the Head, that ran down upon the Beard, even* Aaron's *Beard, that went down to the Skirts of his Garments.* That Ephod of *Aaron* signified the same with the seamless Coat of Christ our great High Priest. As Christ's Coat had no Seam, but was woven from the Top throughout, so it was with the Ephod, *Exod.* xxxix. 22. As God took Care in his Providence, that Christ's Coat should not be rent; *Exod.* xxviii. 32. and Chap. xxxix. 23. The golden Bells on this Ephod, by their precious Matter and pleasant Sound, do well represent the good Profession that the Saints make; and the Pomegranates, the Fruit they bring forth. And as in the Hem of the Ephod, Bells and Pomegranates were constantly connected, as is once and again observed, there was *a golden Bell and a Pomegranate, a golden Bell and a Pomegranate*, Exod. xxviii. 34. and Chap. xxxix. 26. So it is in the true Saints; their good Profession and their good Fruit, do constantly accompany one another: The Fruit they bring forth in Life, ever more answers the pleasant Sound of their Profession.

Again, The very ſame Thing is repreſented by Chriſt, in his Deſcription of his Spouſe, Cant. vii. 2. *Thy Belly is like an Heap of Wheat, ſet about with Lillies.* Here again are beautiful Flowers, and good Fruit, accompanying one another. The Lillies were fair and beautiful Flowers, and the Wheat was good Fruit.

As this Fruit of chriſtian Practice is evermore found in true Saints, according as they have Opportunity and Trial, ſo it is found in them only; none but true Chriſtians do live ſuch an obedient Life, ſo univerſally devoted to their Duty, and given up to the Buſineſs of a Chriſtian, as has been explain'd. All unſanctified Men are *Workers of Iniquity:* They are of their Father the Devil, and the Luſts of their Father they will do: There is no Hypocrite that will go through with the Buſineſs of Religion, and both begin and finiſh the Tour: They will not endure the Trials God is wont to bring on the Profeſſors of Religion, but will turn aſide to their crooked Ways: They will not be thoroughly faithful to Chriſt in their Practice, and follow him whitherſoever he goes. Whatever Lengths they may go in Religion, in ſome Inſtances, and though they may appear exceeding ſtrict, and mightily engaged in the Service of God for a Seaſon; yet they are Servants to Sin; the Chains of their old Taſk-Maſters are not broken: Their Luſts yet have a reigning Power in their Hearts; and therefore to theſe Maſters they will bow down again.* Dan. xii. 10. *Many ſhall be purified and made*

* "No unregenerate Man, tho' he go never ſo far, let him do "never ſo much, but he lives in ſome one Sin or other, ſecret or "open, little or great. *Judas* went far, but he was covetous: "*Herod* went far, but he loved his *Herodias*. Every Dog hath his "Kennel; every Swine hath his Swill; and every wicked Man his "Luſt." *Shepard*'s Sincere Convert, 1ſt Edition, Pa. 96.

"There is never an unſound Heart in the World, but as they "ſay of Witches, they have ſome Familiar that ſucks them, ſo they "have ſome Luſt that is beloved of them, ſome Beloved there is, "they have given a Promiſe never to forſake." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. Page 15.

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made white and tried: But the Wicked will do wickedly: And none of the Wicked shall understand. Isai. 26. *Let Favour*

"No Man that is married to the Law, but his Fig-leaves cover "some Nakedness. All his Duties ever brood some Lust. There is "some one Sin or other the Man lives in; which either the Lord "discovers, and he will not part with, as the young Man; or else "is so spiritual, he cannot see all his Life-Time. Read through the "strictest of all, and see this, *Mat.* 23. *Painted Sepulchres.* *Paul* "that was blameless, yet (*Eph.* ii. 3. *Tit.* iii. 3.) *served divers* "*Lusts and Pleasures.* And the Reason is, the Law is not the Mini-"stration of the Spirit, 2 *Cor.* iii. 8, 9. which breaks off from every "Sin. There is no Law that can give Life, *Gal.* iii. 21: and hence "many Men have strong Resolutions, and break all again. Hence "Men sin and sorrow, and pray again, and then go with more "Ease in their Sin. Examine thyself; is there any living Lust with "thy Righteousness? 'Tis sure, 'tis a Righteousness thou art marri-"ed to, and never wert yet matched to Christ." *Shepard*'s Parable Part I. p. 19, 20,

"No Hypocrite, though he closeth with Christ, and for a Time "grow up in Knowledge of, and Communion with Christ, but he "hath at that Time hidden Lusts and Thorns that overgrow his "Growings, and choak all at last, and in Conclusion mediates a "League between Christ and his Lusts, and seeks to reconcile them "together." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. p. 109.

"—Their Faith is in such a Party, as never was yet thoroughly "rent from Sin. And here is the great Wound of the most cunning "Hypocrites living.—Let a Man be cast down as low as Hell with "Sorrow, and lie under Chains, quaking in Apprehension of Ter-"ror to come; let a Man then be raised up to Heaven in Joy, not able "to live; let a Man reform and shine like an earthly Angel; yet if "not rent from Lust, that either you did never see it, or if so, you "have not followed the Lord to remove it, but proud, dogged, "worldly, sluggish still, false in your Dealings, cunning in your "Tradings, Devils in your Families, Images in your Churches; "you are Objects of Pity now, and shall be of Terror at the great "Day. For where Sin remains in Power, it will bring Faith, and "Christ, and Joy, into Bondage and Service of itself." *Shepard*'s Parable Part I. p. 125.

"Methinks it is with the best Hypocrites, as 'tis with divers old "Merchants: they prize and desire the Gain of Merchandize; but "to be at the Trouble to prepare the Ship, to put themselves upon "the Hazards and Dangers of the Ship, to go and fetch the Trea-"sure that they prize, this they will never do. So many prize and "desires earnestly the Treasures of Heaven; but to be at the Trou-"ble of a Heaven Voyage to fetch this Treasure, to pass through "the Valley of *Baca*, Tears, Temptations, the Powers of Darkness,

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vour be ſhewed to the Wicked, yet will he not learn Righteouſneſs; in the Land of Uprightneſs will he deal unjuſtly. Iſai. xxxv. 8. *And an Highway ſhall be there, and a Way, and it ſhall be called the Way of Holineſs, the Unclean ſhall not paſs over it.* Hoſ. xiv. 9. *The Ways of the Lord are right, and the Juſt ſhall walk in them; but the Tranſgreſſors ſhall fall therein.* Job xxvii. 8, 9, 10. *What is the Hope of the Hypocrite?---Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?* An unſanctified Man may hide his Sin, and may in many Things, and for a Seaſon, remain from Sin; but he will not be brought finally to renounce his Sin, and give it a Bill of Divorce: Sin is too dear to him, for him to be willing

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" the Breaches, Oppoſition and Contradictions of a ſinful unbelieving Heart, good and evil Report, to paſs from one Depth and " Wave to another, this the beſt Hypocrite fails in; and hence " loſes all at laſt. And this I conceive to be one of the great Differences between the ſtrong Deſires and Eſteems of Hypocrites and " Saints.—Look, as 'tis with Men that have two Trades, or two " Shops; one is as much as ever they can follow or tend; they are " forced at laſt to put off one, and they muſt neglect one; ſo here.— " That Spirit of Sloth and Slumber, which the Lord ever leaves the " beſt Hypocrites to, ſo mightily oppreſſeth all their Senſes, that " they cannot uſe effectually all Means to accompliſh their Ends. " And hence a Man deſires the End, but has it not; *Prov.* xiii. 4." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. p. 150, 151.

" Read through all the Scripture; conſtantly, never any Hypo" crites but they had this Brand, *Matth.* vii. 23. *You Workers of Ini*" *quity*," *Shepard*'s Parabl, Part I. p. 195.

" A carnal Man may hit upon ſome good Duty that God com" mands, and refrain ſome Sin that God forbids; but to go through, " he cannot: to take up Reproach and Diſgrace, to loſe his Credit, " to forſake his Friends, to loſe Honour, and Riches and Pleaſures; " this he will not do, till he be humbled." Dr. *Preſton*, on *Paul*'s Converſion.

" So it is with Men, becauſe they want Humiliation Therefore " their *Profeſſion* and *They* do not continue, but part willingly one " from another. They will do ſome Things, but not all Things: " And they will forego ſome Things, but not all Things. And " therefore our Saviour ſaith, *Luke* xiv. *He that will not forſake all* " *for my Sake, is not worthy of Me.* He is not worth the ſaving, " that prizes not me above all Things whatſoever. And a Man will " not prize Chriſt, nor forſake all Things for Chriſt, 'till he be " humbled." Ibid.

ling for that: *Wickedneſs is ſweet in his Mouth*; and therefore *he hides it under his Tongue*; *he ſpares it and forſakes it not*; *but keeps it ſtill within his Mouth*, Job xx. 12, 13. Herein chiefly conſiſts the Straitneſs of the Gate, and the Narrowneſs of the Way that leads to Life; upon the Account of which, carnal Men will not go in thereat, *viz.* That it is a Way of utterly denying and finally renouncing all Ungodlineſs, and ſo a Way of *Self-denial or Self-renunciation.*

Many natural Men, under the Means that are uſed with them, and God's Strivings with them, to bring them to forſake their Sins, do by their Sins, as *Pharaoh* did by his Pride and Covetouſneſs, which he gratified by keeping the Children of *Iſrael* in Bondage, when God ſtrove with him to bring him to let the People go. When God's Hand preſſed *Pharaoh* ſore, and he was exerciſed with Fears of God's future Wrath, he entertained ſome thoughts of letting the People go, and promiſed he would do it; but from Time to Time he broke his Promiſes, when he ſaw there was Reſpite. When God fill'd *Egypt* with Thunder and Lightning, and the Fire ran along the Ground, then *Pharaoh* is brought to confeſs his Sin with ſeeming Humility, and to have a great Reſolution to let the People go. Exod. ix. 27, 28. *And* Pharaoh *ſent and called for* Moſes *and* Aaron, *and ſaid unto them, I have ſinned this Time*; *the Lord is righteous, and I and my People are wicked: Intreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty Thunderings and Hail, and I will let you go, and ye ſhall ſtay no longer.* So Sinners are ſometimes, by Thunders and Lightnings, and great Terrors of the Law, brought to a ſeeming Work of Humiliation, and to Appearance to part with their Sins; but are no more throughly brought to a Diſpoſition to diſmiſs them, than *Pharaoh* was to let the People go. *Pharaoh* in the Struggle that was between his Conſcience and his Luſts, was for contriving that God might be ſerved, and he enjoy his Luſts that were gratified by the Slavery of the People, too.

Moſes

Moſes inſiſted that *Iſrael*'s God ſhould be ſerved and ſacrificed to: *Pharaoh* was willing to conſent to that; but would have it done without his parting with the People: *Go ſacrifice to your God in the Land*, ſays he, *Exod.* viii. 25. So many Sinners are contriving to ſerve God, and enjoy their Luſts too. *Moſes* objected againſt complying with *Pharaoh*'s Propoſal, that ſerving God, and yet continuing in *Egypt* under their Taſk-maſters, did not agree together, and were inconſiſtent one with another; (there is no ſerving God, and continuing Slaves to ſuch Enemies of God at the ſame Time.) After this *Pharaoh* conſented to let the People go, provided they would not go far away: He was not willing to part with them finally, and therefore would have them within Reach. So do many Hypocrites with reſpect to their Sins. Afterwards *Pharaoh* conſented to let the *Men* go, if they would leave the *Women* and *Children*; Exod. x. 8, 9, 10. And then after that, when God's Hand was yet harder upon him, he conſented that they ſhould go, even *Women* and *Children*, as well as *Men*, provided they would leave their *Cattle* behind: But he was not willing to let them go, and all that they had; *Exod.* x. 24. So it ſometimes is with Sinners: They are willing to part with ſome of their Sins; but not all: They are brought to part with the more groſs Acts of Sin; but not to part with their Luſts, in leſſer Indulgencies of them. Whereas we muſt part with all our Sins, little and great; and all that belongs to them, *Men*, *Women*, *Children* and *Cattle:* They muſt all be let go, with *their Young, and with their Old, with their Sons, and with their Daughters, with their Flocks, and with their Herds; there muſt not be an Hoof left behind*: As *Moſes* told *Pharaoh*, with Reſpect to the Children of *Iſrael*. At laſt, when it come to Extremity, *Pharaoh* conſented to let the People all go, and all that they had; but he was not ſtedfaſtly of that Mind: He ſoon repented, and purſued after them again: And the Reaſon was, that thoſe Luſts of Pride and Covetouſneſs,

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that were gratified by *Pharaoh*'s Dominion over the People and the Gains of their Service, were never really mortified in him, but only violently reſtrained. And thus, he being guilty of backſliding, after his ſeeming Compliance with God's Commands, was deſtroyed without Remedy. Thus there may be a forced parting with Ways of Diſobedience to the Commands of God, that may ſeem to be univerſal, as to what appears, for a little Seaſon: But becauſe 'tis a meer Force, without the Mortification of the inward Principle of Sin, they will not perſevere in it; but will return as the Dog to his Vomit; and ſo bring on themſelves dreadful and remedileſs Deſtruction. There were many falſe Diſciples in Chriſt's Time, that followed him for a while; but none of them followed him to the End; but ſome on one Occaſion, and ſome on another, went back and walked no more with him.* From

* "The counterfeit and common Grace of fooliſh Virgins, after "ſome Time of glorious Profeſſion, will certainly go out and be "quite ſpent. It conſumes in the uſing and ſhining and burning.— "Men that have been moſt forward, decay; their Gifts decay, Life "decays.—It is ſo, after ſome Time of Profeſſion: For at firſt, it "rather grows than decays and withers: But afterward they have "enough of it, it withers and dies.—The Spirit of God comes upon many Hypocrites, in abundant and plentiful Meaſure of awakening Grace; it comes upon them, as it did upon *Balaam*, and as "it is in overflowing Waters, which ſpread far, and grow very deep, "and fill many empty Places.——Tho' it doth come upon them ſo, "yet it never reſts within, ſo as to dwell there, to take up an eternal "Manſion for himſelf.——Hence it doth decay by little and little; "'till at laſt it is quite gone. As Ponds fill'd with Rain-Water, "which comes upon them; not Spring-Water, that riſeth up within them; it dries up by little and little, until quite dry." *Shepard's* Parable, Part II: p. 58, 59.

"Some Men may apprehend Chriſt, neither out of Fear of Miſery, nor only to preſerve ſome Sin; but God lets in Light and "Heat of the bleſſed Beams of the glorious Goſpel of the Son of God; "And therefore there is Mercy, rich, free, ſweet, for damned, great, "vile Sinners: Good Lord, ſaith the Soul, what a ſweet Miniſtry, "Word, God and Goſpel is this! and there reſts. This was the "Frame of the Stony-Ground; which heard the Word, and received "it with Joy, and for a Time believed. And this is the Caſe of "Thouſands, that are much affected with the Promiſe and Mercy of "Chriſt,

From what has been said it is manifest, that christian Practice or a holy Life, is *a great and distinguishing Sign* of true and saving Grace. But I may go further, and assert, that it is, *the chief* of all the Signs of Grace, both as an Evidence of the Sincerity of Professors unto others, and also to their own Consciences.

But then it is necessary that this be rightly taken, and that it be well understood and observed, in what Sense and Manner christian Practice is the *greatest Sign* of Grace. Therefore, to set this Matter in a clear Light, I will endeavour particularly and distinctly to prove, that christian Practice is the *principal Sign* by which Christians are to judge, both of their own and others Sincerity of Godliness; withal observing some Things that are needful to be particularly noted, in order to a right Understanding of this Matter.

1. I shall consider christian Practice and an holy Life, as a Manifestation and Sign of the Sincerity of a professing Christian, *to the Eye of his Neighbours* and Brethren.

And that this is the *chief Sign* of Grace in this Respect, is very evident from the Word of God. Christ, who knew best how to give us Rules to judge of others, has repeated it and inculcated it, that we should know them by their Fruits; *Matth.* vii. 16. *Ye shall know them by their Fruits.* And then after arguing the Point, giving clear Reasons why it must needs be, that Men's Fruits must be the chief Evidence of what Sort they are, in

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" Christ, and hang upon free Grace for a Time: But as 'tis with " sweet Smells in a Room, they continue not long; or as Flowers, " they grow old and withered, and then fall. In Time of Temp- " tation, Lust and World, and Sloth, is more sweet than Christ, and " all his Gospel is." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part II. p. 168.

" Never any carnal Heart, but some Root of Bitterness did grow " up at last in this Soil." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I p. 195.

" We shall see in Experience: Take the best Professors living; " tho' they may come, as they and others judged, to the Lord, and " follow the Lord; yet they will in Time depart.——The Spirit ne- " ver was given effectually to draw them; nor yet to keep them." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. p. 205.

in the following Verſes, he cloſes by repeating the Aſſertion; Verſe 20. *Wherefore by their Fruits ye ſhall know them.* Again, Chap. xii. 33. *Either make the Tree good, and his Fruit good; or elſe make the Tree corrupt, and his Fruit corrupt.*---As much as to ſay, 'tis a very abſurd Thing, for any to ſuppoſe that the Tree is good, and yet the Fruit bad; that the Tree is of one Sort, and the Fruit of another; for the proper Evidence of the Nature of the Tree is its Fruit. Nothing elſe can be intended by that laſt Clauſe in the Verſe, *For the Tree is known by its Fruit*, than that the Tree is chiefly known by its Fruit, that this the main and moſt proper Diagnoſtick by which one Tree is diſtinguiſhed from another. So Luke vi. 44. *Every Tree is known by his own Fruit.* Chriſt no where ſays, Ye ſhall know the Tree by its Leaves or Flowers, or ye ſhall know Men by their Talk, or ye ſhall know them by the good Story they tell of their Experiences, or ye ſhall know them by the Manner and Air of their ſpeaking, and Emphaſis and Pathos of Expreſſion, or by their ſpeaking feelingly, or by making a very great Show by Abundance of Talk, or by many Tears and affectionate Expreſſions, or by the Affections ye feel in your Hearts towards them: But by *their Fruits ſhall ye know them*; *the Tree is known by its Fruit*; *Every Tree is known by its own Fruit.* And as this is the Evidence that Chriſt has directed us mainly to look at in others, in judging of them, ſo it is the Evidence that Chriſt has mainly directed to give to others, whereby they may judge of us; Matth v. 16. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that others ſeeing your good Works may glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* Here Chriſt directs us to manifeſt our Godlineſs to others. Godlineſs is as it were a Light that ſhines in the Soul: Chriſt directs that this Light ſhould not only ſhine within, but that it ſhould *ſhine* out *before Men*, that they may ſee it. But which Way ſhall this be? 'Tis by our good Works. Chriſt don't ſay, that others hearing your good Words, your good Story, or your

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pathetical Expreſſions; but *that others ſeeing your good Works, may glorify your Father which is in Heaven.* Doubtleſs when Chriſt gives us a Rule how to make our Light ſhine, that others may have Evidence of it, his Rule is the beſt that is to be found. And the Apoſtles do mention a Chriſtian Practice, as the principal Ground of their Eſteem of Perſons as true Chriſtians; as the Apoſtle *Paul*, in the 6th Chapter of *Hebrews*. There the Apoſtle in the beginning of the Chapter, ſpeaks of them that have great common Illuminations, that have *been enlightened, and have taſted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and have taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, that afterwards fall away*, and are like barren Ground, *that is nigh unto curſing, whoſe End is to be burned:* And then immediately adds in the 9th Verſe, (expreſſing his Charity for the chriſtian *Hebrews*, as having that ſaving Grace, which is better than all theſe common Illuminanations) *But beloved, we are perſwaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation; though we thus ſpeak.* And then in the next Verſe, he tells them what was the Reaſon he had ſuch good Thoughts of them: He don't ſay, that it was becauſe they had given him a good Account of a Work of God upon their Souls, and talked very experimentally; but it was their Work, and Labour of Love; *For God is not unrighteous, to forget your Work, and Labour of Love, which ye have ſhewed towards his Name, in that ye have miniſtered to the Saints, and do miniſter.* And the ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks of a faithful ſerving God in Practice, as the proper Proof to others of Men's loving Chriſt above all, and preferring his Honour to their private Intereſt, Phil. ii. 21, 22. *For all ſeek their own, not the Things which are Jeſus Chriſt's: But ye know the Proof of him, that as a Son with the Father, he hath ſerved with me in the Goſpel.* So the Apoſtle *John* expreſſes the ſame, as the Ground of his good Opinion of *Gaius*, 3 John iii, 4, 5, 6. *For I rejoiced greatly, when the Brethren came and teſtifi-*

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ed of the Truth that is in thee. But how did the Brethren teſtify of the Truth that was in *Gaius?* And how did the Apoſtle judge of the Truth that was in him? It was not becauſe they teſtified that he had given them a good Account of the Steps of his Experiences, and talk'd like one that felt what he ſaid, and had the very Language of a Chriſtian; but they teſtified, *that he walked in the Truth*; as it follows, *even as thou walkeſt in the Truth. I have no greater Joy, than to hear that my Children walk in the Truth. Beloved, thou doſt faithfully, whatſoever thou doſt to the Brethren and to Strangers; which have born Witneſs of thy Charity before the Church.* Thus the Apoſtle explains what the Brethren had born Witneſs of, when they *came and teſtified of his walking in the Truth.* And the Apoſtle ſeems in this Place, to give it as a Rule to *Gaius*, how he ſhould judge of others; in Verſe 10, he mentions one *Diotrephes*, that did not carry himſelf well, and led away others after him; and then in the 11th Verſe, he directs *Gaius* to beware of ſuch, and not to follow them; and gives him a Rule whereby he may know them; exactly agreeable to that Rule Chriſt had given before, *By their Fruits ye ſhall know' em*; ſays the Apoſtle, *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth Good is of God; but he that doth Evil hath not ſeen God.* And I would further obſerve, that the Apoſtle *James*, expreſly comparing that Way of ſhewing others our Faith and Chriſtianity by our Practice or Works, with other Ways of ſhewing our Faith without Works, or not by Works, does plainly and abundantly prefer the former; Jam. ii. 18. *Yea, a Man may ſay, thou haſt Faith and I have Works: Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my Works.* A Manifeſtation of our Faith *without Works*, or in a Way diverſe from Works, is a Manifeſtation of it in *Words*, whereby a Man profeſſes Faith. As the Apoſtle ſays, Ver. 14. *What doth it profit, my Brethren, tho' a Man* SAY *he hath Faith?*---- Therefore here are two Ways of manifeſting to our

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Neighbour what is in our Hearts; one by what we *ſay*, and the other by what we *do*. But the Apoſtle abundantly prefers the Latter as the beſt Evidence. Now certainly all Accounts we give of ourſelves in Words, our ſaying that we have Faith, and that we are converted, and telling the Manner how we came to have Faith, and the Steps by which it was wrought, and the Diſcoveries and Experiences that accompanied it, are ſtill but manifeſting our Faith by what we *ſay*; 'tis but ſhewing our Faith by our *Words*; which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of as falling vaſtly ſhort of manifeſting of it by what we do, and ſhewing our Faith by our *Works*.

And as the Scripture plainly teaches that Practice is the beſt Evidence of the Sincerity of profeſſing Chriſtians; ſo Reaſon teaches the ſame Thing. Reaſon ſhews that Men's Deeds are better and more faithful Interpreters of their Minds, than their Words. The common Senſe of all Mankind, thro' all Ages and Nations, teaches 'em to judge of Men's Hearts chiefly by their Practice, in other Matters: As whether a Man be a loyal Subject, a true Lover, a dutiful Child, or a faithful Servant. If a Man profeſſes a great deal of Love and Friendſhip to another, Reaſon teaches all Men, that ſuch a Profeſſion is not of ſo great an Evidence of his being a real and hearty Friend, as his appearing a Friend in Deeds; being faithful and conſtant to his Friend, in Proſperity and Adverſity, ready to lay out himſelf, and deny himſelf, and ſuffer in his perſonal Intereſt, to do him a Kindneſs. A wiſe Man will truſt to ſuch Evidences of the Sincerity of Friendſhip, further than a thouſand earneſt Profeſſions and ſolemn Declarations, and moſt affectionate Expreſſions of Friendſhip in Words. And there is equal Reaſon why Practice ſhould alſo be looked upon as the beſt Evidence of Friendſhip towards Chriſt. Reaſon ſays the ſame that Chriſt ſaid, in John xiv. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* Thus

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if we see a Man, who in the Course of his Life, seems to follow and imitate Christ, and greatly to exert and deny himself for the Honour of Christ, and to promote his Kingdom and Interest in the World; Reason teaches that this is an Evidence of Love to Christ, more to be depended on, than if a Man only says he has Love to Christ, and tells of the inward Experiences he has had of Love to him, what strong Love he felt, and how his Heart was drawn out in Love at such and such a Time, when it may be there appears but little Imitation of Christ in his Behaviour, and he seems backward to do any great Matter for him, or to put himself out of his Way for the promoting of his Kingdom; but seems to be apt to excuse himself, whenever he is called to deny himself for Christ. So if a Man in declaring his Experiences, tells how he found his Heart weaned from the World, and saw the Vanity of it, so that all looked as nothing to him, at such and such Times, and professes that he gives up all to God, and calls Heaven and Earth to witness to it; but yet in his Practice is violent in pursuing the World, and what he gets he keeps close, is exceeding loath to part with much of it to charitable and pious Uses, it comes from him almost like his Heart's Blood. But there is another professing Christian that says not a great deal, yet in his Behaviour seems ready at all Times to forsake the World, whenever it stands in the Way of his Duty, and is free to part with it at any Time, to promote Religion and the Good of his Fellow-Creatures; Reason teaches that the Latter gives far the most credible Manifestation of an Heart weaned from the World. And if a Man appears to walk humbly before God and Men, and to be of a Conversation that savours of a broken Heart, appearing patient and resign'd to God under Affliction, and meek in his Behaviour amongst Men; this is a better Evidence of Humiliation, than if a Person only tells how great a Sense he had of his own Unworthiness, how he was brought to lie in the Dust, and was quite emptied of himself,

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and see himself nothing and all over filthy and abominable, *&c. &c.* but yet acts as if he looked upon himself one of the first and best of Saints, and by just Right the Head of all the Christians in Town, and is assuming, self-willed, and impatient of the least Contradiction or Opposition; we may be assured in such a Case, that a Man's Practice comes from a lower Place in his Heart, than his Profession. So (to mention no more Instances) if a Professor of Christianity manifests in his Behaviour a pitiful tender Spirit towards others in Calamity, ready to bear their Burthens with them, willing to spend his Substance for them, and to suffer many Inconveniencies in his worldly Interest to promote the Good of others Souls and Bodies; is not this a more credible Manifestation of a Spirit of Love to Men, than only a Man's telling what Love he felt to others at certain Times, how he pitied their Souls, how his Soul was in Travail for them, and how he felt a hearty Love and Pity to his Enemies; when in his Behaviour he seems to be of a very selfish Spirit, close and niggardly, all for himself and none for his Neighbours, and perhaps envious and contentious? Persons in a Pang of Affection may think they have a Willingness of Heart for great Things, to do much and to suffer much, and so may profess it very earnestly and confidently; when really their Hearts are far from it. Thus many in their affectionate Pangs, have thought themselves willing to be damned eternally for the Glory of God. Passing Affections easily produce Words; and Words are cheap; and Godliness is more easily feigned in Words than in Actions. Christian Practice is a costly laborious Thing. The Self-denial that is required of Christians, and the Narrowness of the Way that leads to Life, don't consist in Words, but in Practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like Saints, than to act like Saints.

Thus it is plain that christian Practice is the best Sign or Manifestation of the true Godliness of a professing Christian, to the Eye of his Neighbours. Thus

But then the following Things ſhould be well obſerved, that this Matter may be rightly underſtood.

Firſt, It muſt be obſerved, that when the Scripture ſpeaks of chriſtian Practice, as the beſt Evidence to others, of Sincerity and Truth of Grace, *a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity* is not excluded, but ſuppoſed. The Rules mentioned were Rules given to the Followers of Chriſt, to guide them in their Thoughts of *profeſſing Chriſtians*, and thoſe that offered themſelves as ſome of their Society, whereby they might judge of the Truth of their *Pretences*, and the Sincerity of the *Profeſſion* they made; and not for the Trial of Heathens, or thoſe that made no Pretence to Chriſtianity, and that Chriſtians had nothing to do with. This is as plain as is poſſible in that great Rule which Chriſt gives in the 7th of Matthew, *By their Fruits ye ſhall know them.* He there gives a Rule how to judge of thoſe that profeſſed to be Chriſtians, yea that made a very high Profeſſion, *falſe Prophets, who come in Sheep's Cloathing*, as Verſe 15. So it is alſo with that of the Apoſtle *James*, Chap. ii. 18. *Shew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my Works.* 'Tis evident that both the Sorts of Perſons offering to give theſe diverſe Evidences of their Faith, are Profeſſors of Faith: This is implied in their offering each of them to give Evidences of the Faith they profeſſed. And 'tis evident by the preceeding Verſes, that the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of Profeſſors of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt. So it is very plain that the Apoſtle *John*, in thoſe Paſſages that have been obſerved in his third Epiſtle, is ſpeaking of profeſſing Chriſtians. Tho' in theſe Rules, the chriſtian Practice of Profeſſors be ſpoken of as the greateſt and moſt diſtinguiſhing Sign of their Sincerity in their Profeſſion, much more evidential than their Profeſſion itſelf; yet a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity is preſuppoſed: It is not the main Thing in the Evidence, nor any Thing diſtinguiſhing in it; yet 'tis a Thing requiſite and neceſſary in it. As the having

an animal Body, is not any Thing distinguishing of a Man, from other Creatures, and is not the main Thing in the Evidence of human Nature; yet 'tis a Thing requisite and necessary in the Evidence. So that if any Man should say plainly that he was not a Christian, and did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, or a Person sent of God; these Rules of Christ and his Apostles don't at all oblige us to look upon him as a sincere Christian, let his visible Practice and Virtues, be what they will. And not only do these Rules take no Place with Respect to a Man that explicitly denies Christianity, and is a profess'd Deist, Jew, Heathen, or open Infidel; but also with Respect to a Man that only forbears to make a Profession of Christianity: Because these Rules were given us only to judge of professing Christians: Fruits must be joined with open Flowers; Bells and Pomegranates go together.

But here will naturally arise this Enquiry, *viz.* when a Man may be said to profess Christianity, or what Profession may properly be called a Profession of Christianity?

I answer in two Things;

1. In order to a Man's being properly said to make a Profession of Christianity, there must undoubtedly be a Profession of all that is necessary to his being a Christian, or of so much as belongs to the Essence of Christianity. Whatsoever is essential in Christianity itself, the Profession of that is essential in the Profession of Christianity. The Profession must be of the Thing professed. For a Man to profess Christianity, is for him to declare that he has it. And therefore so much as belongs to a Thing, so as to be necessary in order to its being truly denominated *that* Thing; so much is essential to the Declaration of *that* Thing, in order to its being truly denominated a Declaration of *that* Thing. If we take only a Part of Christianity, and leave out a Part that is essential to it, what we take is not Christianity; because something that is of the Essence of it is wanting. So if we profess

feſs only a Part, and leave out a Part that is eſſential, that which we profeſs is not Chriſtianity. Thus in order to a Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, we muſt profeſs that we believe that *Jeſus* is the *Meſſiah*; for this Reaſon, becauſe ſuch a Belief is eſſential to Chriſtianity. And ſo we muſt profeſs, either expreſly or implicitly, that *Jeſus* ſatisfied for our Sins, and other eſſential Doctrines of the Goſpel; becauſe a Belief of theſe Things alſo are eſſential to Chriſtianity. But there are other Things as eſſential to Religion, as an orthodox Belief; which it is therefore as neceſſary that we ſhould profeſs, in order to our being truly ſaid to profeſs Chriſtianity. Thus it is eſſential to Chriſtianity, that we repent of our Sins, that we be convinced of our own Sinfulneſs, and that we are ſenſible we have juſtly expoſed ourſelves to God's Wrath, and that our Hearts do renounce all Sin, and that we do with our whole Hearts embrace Chriſt as our only Saviour, and that we love him above all, and are willing for his Sake to forſake all, and that we do give up ourſelves to be entirely and forever his, *&c.* Such Things as theſe do as much belong to the Eſſence of Chriſtianity, as the Belief of any of the Doctrines of the Goſpel: And therefore the Profeſſion of them does as much belong to a chriſtian Profeſſion. Not that in order to a being profeſſing Chriſtians, 'tis neceſſary that there ſhould be an explicit Profeſſion of every individual Thing that belongs to chriſtian Grace or Vertue: But certainly, there muſt be a Profeſſion, either expreſs or implicit, of what is of the Eſſence of Religion. And as to thoſe Things that Chriſtians ſhould *expreſs* in their Profeſſion, we ought to be guided by the Precepts of God's Word, or by Scripture Examples of publick Profeſſions of Religion, God's People have made from Time to Time. Thus they ought to profeſs their Repentance of Sin: As of old, when Perſons were initiated as Profeſſors, they came confeſſing their Sins, manifeſting their Humiliation for Sin, *Matth.* iii. 6. And the Baptiſm they were baptiſed with, was

called *the Baptism of Repentance*, Mark i. 3. And *John*, when he had baptised them, exhorted them *to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*, Matth. iii. 8. *i. e.* agreeable to that Repentance which they had professed; encouraging them, that if they did so, they should escape the Wrath to come, and be gather'd as Wheat into God's Garner, *Matth.* iii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 12. So the Apostle *Peter* says to the *Jews*, Acts ii. 38. *Repent, and be baptised:* Which shews that Repentance is a Qualification that must be visible in order to Baptism; and therefore ought to be publickly professed. So when the *Jews* that returned from Captivity, entered publickly into Covenant, it was with Confession, or publick Propfession of Repentance of their Sins, *Nehem.* ix. 2. This Profession of Repentance should include or imply a Profession of Conviction that God would be just in our Damnation: See *Nehem.* ix. 33, together with Verse 35, and the Beginning of the next Chapter. They should profess their Faith in Jesus Christ, and that they embrace Christ, and rely upon him as their Saviour, with their whole Hearts, and that they do joyfully entertain the Gospel of Christ. Thus *Philip*, in order to baptising the Eunuch, required that he should profess that he *believed with all his Heart:* And they that were received as visible Christians, at that great Outpouring of the Spirit, which began at the Day of *Pentecost*, appear'd *gladly to receive the Gospel*; Acts ii. 4. *Then they that gladly received the Word, were baptised, and the same Day there were added unto them about three Thousand Souls.* They should profess that they rely only on Christ's Righteousness and Strength, and that they are devoted to him, as their only Lord and Saviour, and that they rejoice in him as their only Righteousness and Portion. It is foretold that all Nations should be brought publickly to make this Profession, Isai. xlv. 22, to the End; *Look to me, and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the Word is gone out of my Mouth in Righteousness,*

Righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every Knee shall bow, every Tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I Righteousness and Strength. Even to him shall Men come: And all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the Seed of Israel *be justified, and shall glory.* They should profess to give up themselves entirely to Christ, and to God through him; as the Children of *Israel*, when they publickly recognized their Covenant with God; Deut. xxvi. 17. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this Day to be thy God, and to walk in his Ways, and to keep his Statutes, and his Commandments, and his Judgments, and to hearken unto his Voice.* They ought to profess a Willingness of Heart, to embrace Religion with all its Difficulties, and to walk in a Way of Obedience to God universally and perseveringly; Exod. xix. 8. and xxiv. 3,---7. Deut. xxvi. 16, 17, 18. 2 Kings xxiii. 3. Nehem. x. 28, 29. Psal. cxix. 57, 106. They ought to profess that all their Hearts and Souls are in these Engagements to be the Lord's, and for ever to serve him; 2 *Chron.* xv. 12, 13, 14. God's People's swearing to God, and swearing *by* his Name, or *to* his Name, as it might be render'd (by which seems to be signified their solemnly giving upthemselves to him in Covenant, and vowing to receive him as their God, and to be entirely his, to obey and serve him) is spoken of as a Duty to be performed by all God's visible *Israel*; Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20. Psal. lxiii. 11. Isai. xix. 18. Chap. xlv. 23, 24, compared with Rom. xiv. 11, and Phil. ii. 10, 11. Isai. xlviii. 1, 2, and lxv. 15, 16. Jer. iv. 2, and v. 7, and xii. 16. Hos. iv. 15, and x. 4. Therefore, in order to Persons being entitled to full Esteem and Charity, with their Neighbours, as being sincere Professors of Christianity; by those forementioned Rules of Christ and his Apostles, there must be a visibly holy Life, with a Profession, either expressing, or plainly implying such Things as those, which have been now mention'd. We are to *know them by their Fruits*; that is, we are by their

Fruits

Fruits to know whether they be what they profeſs to be; not that we are to know by their Fruits, that they have ſomething in them, which they don't ſo much as pretend to.

And moreover,

2. That Profeſſion of theſe Things, which is properly called a chriſtian Profeſſion, and which muſt be joined with chriſtian Practice, in order to Perſon's being entitled to the Benefit of thoſe Rules, muſt be made (as to what appears) underſtandingly: that is, they muſt be Perſons that appear to have been ſo far inſtructed in the Principles of Religion, as to be in an ordinary Capacity to underſtand the proper Import of what is expreſs'd in their Profeſſion. For Sounds are no Significations or Declarations of any Thing, any further than Men underſtand the Meaning of their own Sounds.

But in order to Perſons making a proper Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſuch as the Scripture directs to, and ſuch as the Followers of Chriſt ſhould require, in order to the Acceptance of the Profeſſors with full Charity, as of their Society; 'tis not neceſſary they ſhould give an Account of the particular Steps and Method, by which the Holy Spirit, ſenſibly to them, wrought and brought about thoſe great eſſential Things of Chriſtianity in their Hearts. There is no Footſtep in the Scripture of any ſuch Way of the Apoſtles, or primitive Miniſters and Chriſtians requiring any ſuch Relation, in order to their receiving and treating others, as their chriſtian Brethren, to all Intents and Purpoſes, or of their firſt examining them, concerning the particular Method and Order of their Experiences. They required of them a Profeſſion of the Things wrought; but no Account of the Manner of Working was required of them. Nor is there the leaſt Shadow in the Scripture of any ſuch Cuſtom in the Church of God, from *Adam* to the Death of the Apoſtle *John*.

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I am far from saying, that it is not requisite that Persons should give any Sort of Account of their Experiences to their Brethren. For Persons to profess those Things wherein the Essence of Christianity lies, is the same Thing as to profess that they *experience* those Things. Thus for Persons solemnly to profess, That, in a Sense and full Conviction of their own utter Sinfulness, Misery, and Impotence, and totally undone State as in themselves, and their just Desert of God's utter Rejection and eternal Wrath, without Mercy, and the utter Insufficiency of their own Righteousness, or any Thing in them, to satisfy divine Justice, or recommend 'em to God's Favour, they do only and entirely depend on the Lord Jesus Christ, and his Satisfaction and Righteousness; that they do with all their Hearts believe the Truth of the Gospel of Christ; and that in a full Conviction and Sense of his Sufficiency and perfect Excellency as a Saviour, as exhibited in the Gospel, they do with their whole Souls cleave to him, and acquiesce in him, as the Refuge and Rest of their Souls, and Fountain of their Comfort; that they repent of their Sins, and utterly renounce all Sin, and give up themselves wholly to Christ, willingly subjecting themselves to him as their King; that they give him their Hearts and their whole Man; and are willing and resolved to have God for their whole and everlasting Portion; and in a Dependance on his Promises of a future eternal Enjoyment of him in Heaven, to renounce all the Enjoyments of this vain World, selling all for this great Treasure and future Inheritance, and to comply with every Command of God, even the most difficult and self-denying, and devote their whole Lives to God's Service; and that in Forgiveness of those that have injured them, and a general Benevolence to Mankind, their Hearts are united to the People of Jesus Christ as their People, to cleave to them and love them as their Brethren, and worship and serve God, and follow Christ in Union and Fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform

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all those Duties that belong to them, as Members of the same Family of God, and mystical Body of Christ; I say, for Persons solemnly to profess such Things as these, as in the Presence of God, is the same Thing, as to profess that they are conscious to, or do *experience* such Things in their Hearts.

Nor is it what I suppose, that Persons giving an Account of their Experience of particular Exercises of Grace, with the Times and Circumstances, gives no Advantage to others in forming a Judgment of their State; or that Persons may not fitly be enquired of concerning these in some Cases, especially Cases of great Importance, where all possible Satisfaction concerning Persons Piety is especially to be desired and sought after, as in the Case of Ordination or Approbation of a Minister. It may give Advantage in forming a Judgment, in several Respects; and among others, in this, That hereby we may be better satisfied that the Professor speaks honestly and understandingly, in what he professes; and that he don't make the Profession in meer Formality. In order to a Profession of Christianity being accepted to any Purpose, there ought to be good Reason, from the Circumstances of the Profession, to think that the Professor don't make such a Profession out of a meer customary Compliance with a prescribed Form, using Words without any distinct Meaning, or in a very lax and ambiguous Manner, as Confessions of Faith are often subscribed; but that the Professor understandingly and honestly signifies what he is conscious of in his own Heart; otherwise his Profession can be of no Significance, and no more to be regarded than the Sound of Things without Life. But indeed (whatever Advantage an Account of particular Exercises may give in judging of this) it must be own'd, that the Professor having been previously thoroughly instructed by his Teachers, and giving good Proof of his sufficient Knowlege, together with a Practice agreeable to his Profession, is the best Evidence of this.

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Nor do I ſuppoſe, but that, if a Perſon that is enquired of about particular Paſſages, Times and Circumſtances of his chriſtian Experience, among other Things, ſeems to be able to give a diſtinct Account of the Manner of his firſt Converſion, in ſuch a Method as has been frequently obſervable in true Converſion, ſo that Things ſeem ſenſibly and diſtinctly to follow one another, in the Order of Time, according to the Order of Nature; it is an illuſtrating Circumſtance, that among other Things, adds Luſtre to the Evidence he gives his Brethren of the Truth of his Experiences.

But the Thing that I ſpeak of as unſcriptural, is the inſiſting on a particular Account of the diſtinct Method and Steps, wherein the Spirit of God did ſenſibly proceed, in firſt bringing the Soul into a State of Salvation, as a Thing requiſite in order to receiving a Profeſſor into full Charity as a real Chriſtian; or ſo, as for the Want of ſuch Relation, to diſregard other Things in the Evidence Perſons give to their Neighbours of their Chriſtianity, that are vaſtly more important and eſſential.

Secondly, That we may rightly underſtand how chriſtian Practice is the greateſt Evidence that others can have of the Sincerity of a profeſſing Chriſtian, 'tis needful that what was ſaid before, ſhewing what chriſtian Practice is, ſhould be borne in Mind; and that it ſhould be conſider'd how far this may be viſible to others. Meerly that a Profeſſor of Chriſtianity is what is commonly called an honeſt Man, and a moral Man, (*i. e.* we have no ſpecial Tranſgreſſion or Iniquity to charge him with, that might bring a Blot on his Character) is no great Evidence of the Sincerity of his Profeſſion. This is not *making his Light ſhine before Men.* This is not that *Work and Labour of Love ſhewed towards Chriſt's Name*, which gave the Apoſtle ſuch Perſwaſion of the Sincerity of the profeſſing *Hebrews*, Heb. vi. 9, 10. It may be ſo, that we may ſee nothing in a Man, *but that he may be* a good Man, there may appear nothing in his

Life

Life and Converſation inconſiſtent with his being godly, and yet neither may there be any great poſitive Evidence *that he is* ſo. But there may be great poſitive Appearances of Holineſs in Men's viſible Behaviour: Their Life may appear to be a Life of the Service of God: They may appear to follow the Example of Jeſus Chriſt, and come up in a great Meaſure to thoſe excellent Rules in the 5th, 6th, and 7th Chapters of *Matthew*, and 12th of *Romans*, and many other Parts of the New-Teſtament: There may be a great Appearance of their being univerſal in their Obedience to Chriſt's Commands and the Rules of the Goſpel. They may appear to be univerſal in the Performance of the Duties of the firſt Table, manifeſting the Fear and Love of God; and alſo univerſal in fulfilling Rules of Love to Men, Love to Saints, and Love to Enemies; Rules of Meekneſs and Forgiveneſs, Rules of Mercy and Charity, and looking not only at our own Things, but alſo at the Things of others; Rules of doing Good to Men's Souls and Bodies, to particular Perſons and to the Public; Rules of Temperance and Mortification, and of an humble Converſation; Rules of bridling the Tongue, and improving it to glorify God and bleſs Men, ſhewing that in their Tongues is the Law of Kindneſs. They may appear to walk as Chriſtians in all Places, and at all Seaſons, in the Houſe of God, and in their Families, and among their Neighbours, on Sabbath-Days, and every Day, in Buſineſs and in Converſation, towards Friends and Enemies, towards Superiors, Inferiors, and Equals. Perſons in their viſible Walk may appear to be very earneſtly engaged in the Service of God and Mankind, much to labour and lay out themſelves in this Work of a Chriſtian, and to be very conſtant and ſtedfaſt in it, under all Circumſtances and Temptations. There may be great Manifeſtations of a Spirit to deny themſelves, and ſuffer for God and Chriſt, and the Intereſt of Religion, and the Benefit of their Brethren. There may be great Appearances in a Man's Walk, of

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a Diſpoſition to forſake any Thing, rather than to forſake Chriſt, and to make every Thing give Place to his Honour. There may be great Manifeſtations in a Man's Behaviour of ſuch Religion as this being his Element, and of his placing the Delight and Happineſs of his Life in it: And his Converſation may be ſuch, that he may carry with him a ſweet Odour of chriſtian Graces and heavenly Diſpoſitions, wherever he goes. And when it is thus in the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, here is an Evidence to others of their Sincerity in their Profeſſion, to which all other Manifeſtations are not worthy to be compared.

There is doubtleſs a great Variety in the Degrees of Evidence that Profeſſors do exhibit of their Sincerity, in their Life and Practice; as there is a Variety in the Fairneſs and Clearneſs of Accounts Perſons give of the Manner and Method of their Experiences: But undoubtedly ſuch a Manifeſtation as has been deſcribed, of a chriſtian Spirit in Practice, is vaſtly beyond the faireſt and brighteſt Story of particular Steps and Paſſages of Experiences, that ever was told. And in general a Manifeſtation of the Sincerity of a chriſtian Profeſſion in Practice, is far better than a Relation of Experiences.

But yet,

Thirdly, It muſt be noted, agreeable to what was formerly obſerved, That no external Manifeſtations and outward Appearances whatſoever, that are viſible to the World, are infallible Evidences of Grace. Theſe Manifeſtations that have been mentioned, are the beſt that Mankind can have; and they are ſuch as do oblige Chriſtians entirely to embrace Profeſſors as Saints, and love 'em and rejoice in 'em as the Children of God, and are ſufficient to give them as great Satisfaction concerning them, as ever is needful to guide them in their Conduct, or for any Intent and Purpoſe that needs to be anſwered in this World. But nothing that appears to them in their

their Neighbour, can be ſufficient to beget an abſolute Certainty concerning the Sate of his Soul: For they ſee not his Heart, nor can they ſee all his external Behaviour; for much of it is in ſecret, and hid from the Eye of the World: And 'tis impoſſible certainly to determine, how far a Man may go in many external Appearances and Imitations of Grace, from other Principles. Tho' undoubtedly, if others could ſee ſo much of what belongs to Men's Practice, as their own Conſciences may ſee of it, it might be an infallible Evidence of their State, as will appear from what follows.

Having thus conſidered chriſtian Practice as the *beſt Evidence* of the Sincerity of Profeſſors *to others*, I now proceed,

2. To obſerve that the Scripture alſo ſpeaks of chriſtian Practice, as a diſtinguiſhing and ſure Evidence of Grace to *Perſons own Conſciences*. This is very plain in 1 John ii. 3. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.* And the Teſtimony of our Conſciences, with Reſpect to our good Deeds, is ſpoken of as that which may give us Aſſurance of our own Godlineſs; 1 John iii. 18, 19. *My little Children let us not love the World, neither in Tongue, nor in Deed* in the Original it is ΕΡΓΩ *in Work) and in Truth. And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him.* And the Apoſtle *Paul*, in Heb. vi. ſpeaks of *the Work, and Labour of Love*, of the chriſtian *Hebrews*, as that which both gave him a Perſwaſion, that they had ſomething above the higheſt common Illuminations, and alſo as that Evidence which tended to give them the higheſt Aſſurance of Hope concerning themſelves; Ver. 9. &c. *But Beloved, we are perſwaded better Things of you, and Things that accompany Salvation, tho' we thus ſpeak. For God is not unrighteous, to forget your Work, and Labour of Love, which ye have ſhewed towards his Name; in that ye have miniſtered to his Saints,*

and

and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same Diligence, to the full Assurance of Hope, unto the End. So the Apostle directs the *Galatians* to examine their Behaviour or Practice, that they might have Rejoicing in themselves in their own happy State; Gal. vi. 4. *Let every Man prove his own Work; so shall he have Rejoicing in himself, and not in another.* And the Psalmist says, Psal. cxix. 6. *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have Respect to all thy Commandments. i. e.* Then shall I be bold and assured, and stedfast in my Hope. And in that of our Saviour, Matth. vii. 19, 20. *Every Tree that bringeth not forth good Fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the Fire: Wherefore, by their Fruits ye shall know them.* Tho' Christ gives this firstly, as a Rule by which we should judge of others, yet in the Words that next follow, he plainly shews, that he intends it also as a Rule by which we should judge ourselves; *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that* DOTH THE WILL *of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say unto me in that Day, Lord, Lord, &c.---and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me* YE THAT WORK INIQUITY. *Therefore whosoever heareth these Sayings of mine, and* DOTH *them, I will liken them to a wise Man, which built his House upon a Rock.---And every one that heareth these Sayings of mine, and* DOTH THEM NOT, *shall be liken'd unto a foolish Man, which built his House upon the Sand.* I shall have Occasion to mention other Texts that shew the same Thing, hereafter.

But for the greater Clearness in this Matter, I would *First*, Shew how christian Practice, doing good Works, or keeping Christ's Commandments, is to be taken, when the Scripture represents it as a sure Sign to our own Consciences, that we are real Christians. And *Secondly*, will prove that this is the Chief of all Evidences that Men can have of their own sincere Godliness.

First,

First, I would ſhew how chriſtian Practice, or keeping Chriſt's Commandments, is to be taken, when the Scripture repreſents it as a ſure Evidence to our own Conſciences, that we are ſincere Chriſtians.

And here I would obſerve, that we can't reaſonably ſuppoſe, that when the Scripture in this Caſe ſpeaks of good Works, good Fruit, and keeping Chriſt's Commandments; that it has Reſpect merely to what is external, or the Motion and Action of the Body, without including any thing elſe, having no Reſpect to any Aim or Intention of the Agent, or any Act of his Underſtanding or Will. For conſider Men's Actions ſo, and they are no more good Works or Acts of Obedience, than the regular Motions of a Clock; nor are they conſidered as the Actions of the Men or any human Actions at all. The Actions of the Body, taken thus, are neither Acts of Obedience, nor Diſobedience; any more than the Motions of the Body in a Convulſion. But the Obedience and Fruit that is ſpoken of, is the Obedience and Fruit of the Man; and therefore not only the Acts of the Body, but the Obedience of the Soul, conſiſting in the Acts and Practice of the Soul. Not that I ſuppoſe that when the Scripture ſpeaks, in this Caſe, of gracious Works and Fruit and Practice, that in theſe Expreſſions is included all inward Piety and Holineſs of Heart, both Principle and Exerciſe, both Spirit and Practice: Becauſe then, in theſe Things being given as Signs of a gracious Principle in the Heart, the ſame Thing would be given as a Sign of itſelf, and there would be no Diſtinction between Root and Fruit. But only the gracious Exerciſe, and holy Act of the Soul is meant, and given as the Sign of the holy Principle, and good Eſtate. Neither is every Kind of inward Exerciſe of Grace meant; but the practical Exerciſe, that Exerciſe of the Soul, and Exertion of inward Holineſs, which there is an obediential Act; or that Exertion of the Mind, and Act of Grace, which iſſues and terminates in what they call the imperate Acts of the Will; in which

which something is directed and commanded by the Soul to be done, and brought to pass in Practice.

Here for a clearer Understanding, I would observe, that there are two Kinds of Exercises and Grace. 1. There are those that some call *immanent* Acts: That is, those Exercises of Grace that remain within the Soul, that begin and are terminated there, without any immediate Relation to any Thing to be done outwardly, or to be brought to pass in Practice. Such are the Exercises of Grace, which the Saints often have in *Contemplation*: When the Exercise that is in the Heart, don't directly proceed *to*, or terminate *in* any Thing beyond the Thoughts of the Mind; however they may tend to Practice (as all Exercises of Grace do) more remotely. 2. There is another Kind of Acts of Grace, that are more strictly called *practical*, or effective Exercises; because they immediately respect something to be done. They are the Exertions of Grace in the commanding Acts of the Will, directing the outward Actions. As when a Saint gives a Cup of cold Water to a Disciple, in and from the Exercise of the Grace of Charity; or voluntarily endures Persecution, in the Way of his Duty, immediately from the Exercise of a supreme Love to Christ. Here is the Exertion of Grace producing it's Effect in outward Actions. These Exercises of Grace are practical and productive of good Works, not only in this Sense, that they are of a *productive Nature*, (for so are all Exercises of true Grace) but they are the *producing* Acts. This is properly the Exercise of Grace in the Act of the Will; and this is properly the Practice of the Soul. And the Soul is the immediate Actor of no other Practice than this: The Motions of the Body follow from the Laws of Union between the Soul and Body, which God, and not the Soul has fixed, and does maintain. The Act of the Soul, and the Exercise of Grace, that is exerted in the Performance of a good Work, is the good Work itself, as far as the Soul is concerned in it, or so far as it is the Soul's good

Work.

Work. The Determinations of the Will, are indeed our very Actions, so far as they are properly ours, as Dr. *Doddridge* observes.† In this Practice of the Soul, is included the Aim and Intention of the Soul which is the Agent. For not only should we not look on the Motions of a Statue, doing Justice or distributing Alms by Clock-work, as any Acts of Obedience to Christ in that Statue; but neither would any Body call the voluntary Actions of a Man, externally and materially agreeable to a Command of Christ, by the Name of Obedience to Christ, if he had never heard of Christ, or any of his Commands, or had no Thought of his Commands in what he did.---If the Acts of Obedience and good Fruits spoken of, be looked upon, not as meer Motions of the Body, but as Acts of the Soul; the whole Exercise of the Spirit of the Mind, in the Action, must be taken in, with the End acted for, and the Respect the Soul then has to God, &c; otherwise they are no Acts of Denial of ourselves, or Obedience to God, or Service done to him, but something else. Such effective Exercises of Grace as these that I have now described, many of the Martyrs have experienc'd in a high Degree. And all true Saints live a Life of such Acts of Grace as these; as they all live a Life of gracious Works, of which these operative Exertions of Grace are the Life and Soul. And this is the Obedience and Fruit that God mainly looks at, as he looks at the Soul, more than the Body; as much as the Soul, in the Constitution of the human Nature, is the superior Part. As God looks at the Obedience and Practice of the Man, he looks at the Practice of the Soul; for the Soul is the Man in God's Sight; *For the Lord seeth not as Man seeth, for he looketh on the Heart.*

And thus it is, that Obedience, good Works, good Fruit, are to be taken, when given in Scripture as a sure Evidence

† Scripture Doctrine of Salvation. Sermon I. p. 11.

Evidence to our own Conſciences of a true Principle of Grace; even as including the Obedience and Practice of the Soul, as preceeding and governing the Actions of the Body. When Practice is given in Scripture as the main Evidence of our true Chriſtianity to others, then is meant that in our Practice which is viſible to them, even our outward Actions: But when Practice is given as a ſure Evidence of our real Chriſtianity to our own Conſciences, then is meant that in our Practice which is viſible to our own Conſciences; which is not only the Motion of our Bodies, but the Exertion and Exerciſe of the Soul, which directs and commands that Motion; which is more directly and immediately under the View of our own Conſciences, than the Act of the Body. And that this is the Intent of the Scripture, not only does the Nature and Reaſon of the Thing ſhew, but it is plain by the Scripture itſelf. Thus it is evident that when Chriſt, at the Concluſion of his Sermon on the Mount, ſpeaks of *doing* or practiſing thoſe Sayings of his, as the grand Sign of Profeſſors being true Diſciples, without which he likens 'em to a Man that built his Houſe upon the Sand, and with which, to a Man that built his Houſe upon a Rock; He has a Reſpect, not only to the outward Behaviour, but to the inward Exerciſe of the Mind in that Behaviour: As is evident by obſerving what thoſe preceeding Sayings of his are, that he refers to, when he ſpeaks of our doing or practiſing them: And we ſhall find they are ſuch as theſe; *Bleſſed are the poor in Spirit, Bleſſed are they that mourn, Bleſſed are the Meek, Bleſſed are they that do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, Bleſſed are the Merciful, Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, Whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a Cauſe, &c. Whoſoever looketh on a Woman to luſt after her, &c. Love your Enemies, Take no Thought for your Life*, and others of the like Nature, which imply inward Exerciſes: And when Chriſt ſays, John xiv. 21. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me*; He has evidently a ſpecial Re-

ſpect to that Command ſeveral Times repeated in the ſame Diſcourſe (which he calls, by Way of Eminence, *His Commandment*) *that they ſhould love one another, as he had loved them:* (See Chap. xiii. 34, 35, and Chap. xv. 10, 12, 13, 14.) But this Command reſpects chiefly an Exerciſe of the Mind or Heart, tho' exerted in Practice. So when the Apoſtle *John* ſays, 1 John ii. 3. *Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments*; He has plainly a principal Reſpect to the ſame Command, as appears by what follows, Ver. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 2d Epiſt. Ver. 5, 6. And when we are told in Scripture, that Men ſhall at the laſt Day be judged *according to their Works*, and *all ſhall receive according to the Things done in the Body*; it is not to be underſtood only of outward Acts; for if ſo, why is God ſo often ſpoken of as ſearching the Hearts and trying the Reins, *That he may render to every one according to his Works?* as Rev. ii. 23. *And all the Churches ſhall know that I am he that ſearcheth the Reins and the Hearts; and I will give unto every one according to his Works*; Jer. xvii. 9, 10. *I the Lord ſearch the Hearts, I try the Reins; even to give every Man according to his Ways, and according to the Fruit of his Doings.* But if by *his Ways, and the Fruit of his Doings*, is meant only the Actions of his Body, what need of *ſearching the Heart and Reins*, in order to know them? *Hezekiah* in his Sickneſs pleads his Practice as an Evidence of his Title to God's Favour, as including, not only his outward Actions, but what was in his Heart, Iſai. xxxviii. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee, in Truth, and with a perfect Heart.*

Tho' in this great Evidence of Sincerity that the Scripture gives us, what is inward is of greateſt Importance; yet what is outward is included and intended, as connected with the practical Exertion of Grace in the Will, directing and commanding the Actions of the Body. And hereby are effectually cut off all Pretenſions that any Man can have to Evidences of Godlineſs, who

externally

externally lives wickedly: Becauſe the great Evidence lies in that inward Exerciſe and Practice of the Soul, which conſiſts in the Act of the Will, commanding outward Acts. But 'tis known that theſe commanding Acts of the Will are not one Way, and the Actions of the bodily Organs another: For the unalterable Law of Nature is, that they ſhould be united, as long as Soul and Body are united, and the Organs are not ſo deſtroyed to be incapable of thoſe Motions that the Soul commands. Thus it would be ridiculous for a Man to plead, that the commanding Act of his Will was to go to the public Worſhip, while his Feet carry him to a Tavern or Brothel-Houſe; or that the commanding Act of his Will was to give ſuch a Piece of Money, he had in his Hand, to a poor Beggar, while his Hand at the ſame Inſtant, kept it back, and held it faſt.

Secondly, I proceed to ſhew that chriſtian Practice, taken in the Senſe that has been explained, is the *chief* of all the Evidences of a ſaving Sincerity in Religion, to the Conſciences of the Profeſſors of it; much to be preferr'd to the Method of the firſt Convictions, Enlightnings and Comforts in Converſion, or any immanent Diſcoveries or Exerciſes of Grace whatſoever, that begin and end in Contemplation. * The Evidence of this appears by the following Arguments.

* "Look upon *John*, Chriſt's beloved Diſciple and Boſom Com-
" panion; he had received the anointing to know him that is true,
" *and he knew that he knew him*, 1. John ii. 3. But how did he
" know that? He might be deceived (as 'tis ſtrange to ſee what a me-
" lancholly Fancy will do, and the Effects of it; as honeſt Men are
" reputed to have weak Brains, and never ſaw the Depths of the
" Secrets of God) what's his LAST Proof? *Becauſe we keep his Com-*
" *mandments.*" *Shepard*'s Par. Part I. p. 131.

"A Man may know his preſent Union to the Lord Jeſus, by a
" Work; 1 John ii. 4. *He that ſaith I know him, and keeps not his*
" *Commandments, is a Lyar.*---Yes that is true negatively; but may
" a Man, ought a Man, to ſee or know his Union poſitively by this?
" Anſ. Verſe 5. Many ſaid they did know and love the Lord, but *he*

" *that*

Argument I. Reaſon plainly ſhews that thoſe Things which put it to the Proof what Men will actually cleave to and prefer in their Practice, when left to follow their own Choice and Inclinations, are the proper Trial what they do really prefe in their Hearts. Sincerity in Religion, as has been obſerved already, conſiſts in ſetting God higheſt in the Heart, in chuſing him before other Things, in having a Heart to ſell all for Chriſt, *&c.*--- But a Man's Actions are the proper Trial what a Man's Heart prefers. As for Inſtance, when it is ſo that God and other Things come to ſtand in Competition, God is as it were ſet before a Man on one Hand, and his worldly Intereſt or Pleaſure on the other, (as it often is ſo in the Courſe of a Man's Life) his Behaviour in ſuch Caſe, in actually cleaving to the one and forſaking the other, is the proper Trial which he prefers. Sincerity conſiſts in forſaking all for Chriſt in Heart; but to forſake all for Chriſt in Heart, is the very ſame Thing as to have an Heart to forſake all for Chriſt: But certainly the proper Trial whether a Man has an Heart to forſake all for Chriſt, is his being actually put to it, the having Chriſt and

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"*that keeps his Words*---O they are ſweet! It's Heaven to cleave to "him in every Command; it's Death to depart from any Com- "mand: *Hereby know we that we are in him.* If it were poſſible to "aſk of Angels, how they know they are not Devils, they would "anſwer, the Lord's Will is ours." *Shepard*'s Par. Part. I. p. 138.

"If the Queſtion be, Whom doth the Lord Jeſus love; you need "not go to Heaven for it, the Word is nigh thee, *Thoſe that love "Chriſt?* Who are thoſe? *Thoſe that keep his Commandments.*" *Shepard*'s Par. Part. I. p. 138.

"Will you have Chriſt ſit in Heaven, and not look that he ſub- "due your Luſts by the Work of his Grace, and ſo ſway your "Hearts? You deſpiſe his Kingdom then. Do you ſeek for Pardon "in the Blood of Chriſt, and never look for the Vertue and End of "that Blood to waſh you and make you without Spot, *&c.*? You "deſpiſe his Prieſthood and Blood then. Do you look for Chriſt to "do Work for you, and you not do Chriſt's Work, and bring forth "Fruit to him? You deſpiſe his Honour then, *John* xv. 8. If I were "to diſcover a Hypocrite, or a falſe Heart, this I would ſay, It is he "that ſhall ſet up Chriſt, but loath his Work." *Shepard*'s Parable Part I. p. 140.

and other Things coming in Competition, that he must actually or practically cleave to one and forsake the other. To forsake all for Christ in Heart, is the same Thing as to have a Heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it: But the highest Proof to ourselves and others, that we have an Heart to forsake all for Christ when called to it, is actually doing it when called to it, or so far as called to it. To follow Christ in Heart, is to have an Heart to follow him. To deny ourselves in Heart for Christ, is the same Thing as to have an Heart to deny ourselves for him in Fact. The main and most proper Proof of a Man's having an Heart to any Thing, concerning which he is at Liberty to follow his own Inclinations, and either to do or not to do as he pleases, is his doing of it. When a Man is at Liberty whether to speak or keep Silence, the most proper Evidence of his having an Heart to speak, is his speaking. When a Man is at Liberty whether to walk or sit still, the proper Proof of his having an Heart to walk, is his walking. Godliness consists not in an Heart to intend to do the Will of God, but in an Heart to do it. The Children of *Israel* in the Wilderness had the former, of whom we read, Deut. v. 27, 28, 29. *Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it and do it. And the Lord heard the Voice of your Words, when ye spake unto me; and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the Voice of the Words of this People, which they have spoken unto thee: They have well said all that they have spoken: O that there were such an* HEART *in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their Children forever.* The People manifested that they had *a Heart to intend to keep God's Commandments*, and to be very forward in those Intentions; but God manifests that this was far from being the Thing that he desired, wherein true Godliness consists, even *an Heart actually to keep them.*

'Tis

'Tis therefore exceeding abſurd, and even ridiculous, for any to pretend that they have a good Heart, while they live a wicked Life, or don't bring forth the Fruit of univerſal Holineſs in their Practice. For 'tis proved in Fact, that ſuch Men don't love God above all. 'Tis fooliſh to diſpute againſt plain Fact and Experience. Men that live in Ways of Sin, and yet flatter themſelves that they ſhall go to Heaven, or expect to be received hereafter as holy Perſons, without a holy Life and Practice, act as tho' they expected to make a Fool of their Judge. Which is implied in what the Apoſtle ſays (ſpeaking of Men's doing good Works, and living an holy Life, thereby exhibiting Evidence of their Title to everlaſting Life) Gal. vi. 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: For whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* As much as to ſay, "Don't deceive your-"ſelves with an Expectation of reaping Life everlaſting "hereafter, if you don't ſow to the Spirit here; 'tis in "vain to think that God will be made a Fool of by you, "that he will be ſham'd and baffled with Shadows in-"ſtead of Subſtance, and with vain Pretences, inſtead "of that good Fruit which he expects, when the Con-"trary to what you pretend, appears plainly in your "Life, before his Face." In this Manner the Word *mock* is ſometimes uſed in Scripture. Thus *Delilah* ſays to *Sampſon*, *Behold, thou haſt mocked me, and told me Lies*, Judg. xvi. 10, 13. i.e. "Thou haſt baffled me, as tho' "you would make a Fool of me, as if I might be eaſily "turned off with any vain Pretence, inſtead of the "Truth." So it is ſaid that *Lot*, when he told his Sons in Law that God would deſtroy that Place, *he ſeem'd as one that mocked to his Sons in Law*, Gen. xix. 14. i.e. He ſeemed as one that would make a Game of them, as tho' they were ſuch credulous Fools as to regard ſuch Bugbears. But the great Judge, whoſe Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, will not be mocked or baffled with any Pretences, without a holy Life. If in his Name Men have prophecy'd and wrought Miracles, and have had

Faith

Faith, ſo that they could remove Mountains, and caſt out Devils, and however high their religious Affections have been, however great Reſemblances they have had of Grace, and tho' their hiding Place has been ſo dark and deep, that no human Skill nor Search could find them out; yet if they are *Workers* or *Practiſers of Iniquity*, they can't hide their Hypocriſy from their Judge; Job. xxxiv. 22. *There is no Darkneſs, nor Shadow of Death, where the* WORKERS OF INIQUITY *may hide themſelves.* Would a wiſe Prince ſuffer himſelf to be fool'd and baffled by a Subject, who ſhould pretend that that he was a loyal Subject, and ſhould tell his Prince that he had an entire Affection to him, and that at ſuch and ſuch a Time he had Experience of it, and felt his Affections ſtrongly working towards him, and ſhould come expecting to be accepted and rewarded by his Prince, as one of his beſt Friends on that Account, tho' he lived in Rebellion againſt him, following ſome Pretender to his Crown, and from Time to Time ſtirring up Sedition againſt him? Or would a Maſter ſuffer himſelf to be ſham'd and gull'd by a Servant, that ſhould pretend to great Experiences of Love and Honour towards him in his Heart, and a great Senſe of his Worthineſs and Kindneſs to him, when at the ſame Time he refuſed to obey him, and he could get no Service done by him?

Argument II. As Reaſon ſhews that thoſe Things which occur in the Courſe of Life, that put it to the Proof whether Men will prefer God to other Things in Practice, are the proper Trial of the Uprightneſs and Sincerity of their Hearts; ſo the ſame are repreſented as the proper Trial of the Sincerity of Profeſſors, in the Scripture. There we find that ſuch Things are called by that very Name, *Trials* or *Temptations* (which I before obſerved are both Words of the ſame Signification.) The Things that put it to the Proof whether Men will prefer God to other Things in Practice, are the Difficulties

culties of Religion, or those Things which occur that make the Practice of Duty difficult and cross to other Principles besides the Love of God; because in them, God and other Things are both set before Men together, for their actual and practical Choice; and it comes to this, that we can't hold to both, but one or the other must be forsaken. And these Things are all over the Scripture called by the Name of *Trials* or *Proofs*.* And they are called by this Name, because hereby Professors are tried and proved of what Sort they be, whether they be really what they profess and appear to be; and because in them, the Reality of a supreme Love to God is brought to the Test of Experiment and Fact; they are the proper Proofs, in which it is truly determined by Experience, whether Men have a thorough Disposition of Heart to cleave to God or no; Deut. viii. 2 *And thou shalt remember all the Way which the Lord thy God led thee, these forty Years in the Wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, whether thou wouldst keep his Commandments or no.* Judges ii. 21. 22. *I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them, of the Nations which* Joshua *left when he died; that through them I may prove* Israel, *whether they will keep the Way of the Lord.* So Chap. iii. 1, 4. and Exod. xvi. 4. And the Scripture, when it calls these Difficulties of Religion by the Name of Temptations or Trials, explains itself to mean thereby, the Trial or Experiment of their Faith, Jam. i. 2, 3. *My Brethren, count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your Faith worketh Patience.* 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. *Now for a Season ye are in Heaviness, thro' manifold Temptations; That the Trial of your Faith, being much more precious than of Gold,* &c. So the Apostle *Paul* speaks of that expensive Duty of parting with our Substance to

* 2 Cor. viii. 2. Heb. xi. 36. 1 Pet. i. 7. Chap. iv. 12. Gen. xxii. 1. Deut. viii. 2, 16. Chap. 13, 3. Exod. xv. 25, and xvi 4. Judges ii. 22. Chap. iii. 1, 4. Psal. lxvi. 10, 11. Dan. xii. 10. Rev. iii. 10. Job. xxiii. 10. Zach. xiii. 9. Jam. i. 2, 3. 1 Pet. i. 6.

to the Poor, as the Proof of the Sincerity of the Love of Chriſtians, 2. *Cor.* viii. 8. And the Difficulties of Religion are often repreſented in Scripture as being the Trial of Profeſſors, in the ſame Manner that the Furnace is the proper Trial of Gold or Silver; Pſal. lxvi. 10, 11. *Thou, O God, haſt proved us, thou haſt tried us, as Silver is tried: Thou broughteſt us into the Net; thou laidſt Affliction upon our Loins*, Zech. xiii. 9. *And I will bring the third Part of them through the Fire: And I will refine them as Silver is refined; and I will try them as Gold is tried.* That which has the Colour and Appearance of Gold is put into the Furnace, to try whether it be what it ſeems to be, real Gold or no. So the Difficulties of Religion are called Trials, becauſe they try thoſe that have the Profeſſion and Appearance of Saints, whether they are what they appear to be, real Saints. If we put true Gold into the Furnace, we ſhall find it's great Value and Precioufneſs: So the Truth and ineſtimable Value of the Virtues of a true Chriſtian appear, when under theſe Trials; 1 Pet. i. 7. *That the Trial of your Faith, being much more precious than of Gold that periſheth, might be found unto Praiſe, and Honour, and Glory.* True and pure Gold will come out of the Furnace in full Weight: So true Saints when tried come forth as Gold, *Job.* xxiii. 10. Chriſt diſtinguiſhes true Grace from counterfeit by this, that it is *Gold tried in the Fire*, Rev. iii. 17, 18. So that it is evident that theſe Things are called *Trials* in Scripture, principally as they try to prove the Sincerity of Profeſſors. And from what has been now obſerved, 'tis evident that they are the moſt proper Trial or Proof of their Sincerity; Inaſmuch as the very meaning of the Word *Trial*, as it is ordinarily uſed in Sripture, is the Difficulty occurring in the Way of a Profeſſor's Duty, as the Trial or Experiment of his Sincerity. If *Trial of Sincerity* be the proper Name of theſe Difficulties of Religion, then doubtleſs theſe Difficulties of Religion are *properly and eminently* the Trial of Sincerity: For they are doubtleſs eminently

what they are called by the Holy Ghoſt: God gives Things their Name from that which is eminently their Nature. And if it be ſo, that theſe Things are the proper and eminent Trial, Proof or Experiment of the Sincerity of Profeſſors; then certainly the Reſult of the Trial or Experiment (that is Perſons Behaviour or Practice under ſuch Trials) is the proper and eminent Evidence of their Sincerity. For they are called Trials or Proofs, only with Regard to the Reſult, and becauſe the Effect is eminently the *Proof* or *Evidence*. And this is the moſt proper Proof and Evidence to the Conſcience of thoſe that are the Subjects of theſe Trials. For when God is ſaid by theſe Things to *try Men, and prove them, to ſee what is in their Hearts, and whether they will keep his Commandments or no*; we are not to underſtand, that it is for his own Information, or that he may obtain Evidence himſelf of their Sincerity; (for he needs no Trials for his Information) but chiefly for their Conviction, and to exhibit Evidence to their Conſciences.*

Thus when God is ſaid to prove *Iſrael* by the Difficulties they met with in the Wilderneſs, and by the Difficulties they met with from their Enemies in *Canaan*, to know what was in their Hearts, whether they would keep his Commandments or no; it muſt be underſtood that it was to diſcover them to themſelves, that they might know what was in their own Hearts. So when God tempted or tried *Abraham* with that difficult Command of offering up his Son, it was not for his Satisfaction, whether he fear'd God or no, but for *Abraham*'s own greater Satisfaction and Comfort, and the more clear Manifeſtation of the Favour of God to him. When *Abraham* had proved faithful under this Trial

* "I am perſwaded, as *Calvin* is, That all the ſeveral Trials of "Men, are to ſhew them to themſelves, and to the World, that they "be but Counterfeits; and to make Saints known to themſelves, the "better--Rom. v. 5. *Tribulation works Trial, and that Hope.* Prov. "xvii. 3. If you will know whether it will hold Weight, the Trial "will tell you." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part I. p. 191.

Trial, God says to him, *Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not witheld thy Son, thine only Son from me.* Which plainly implies, that in this practical Exercise of *Abraham*'s Grace under this Trial, was a clearer Evidence of the Truth of his Grace, than ever was before; and the greatest Evidence to *Abraham*'s Conscience; because God himself gives it to *Abraham* as such, for his Comfort and Rejoycing; and speaks of it to him, as what might be the greatest Evidence to his Conscience, of his being upright in the Sight of his Judge. Which proves what I say, that holy Practice under Trials is the highest Evidence of the Sincerity of Professors to their own Consciences. And we find that Christ from Time to Time took the same Method to convince the Consciences of those that pretended Friendship to him, and to shew them what they were. This was the Method he took with the rich young Man, *Matth.* xix. 16, &c. He seem'd to shew a great Respect to Christ; he came kneeling to him, and called him *Good Master*, and made a great Profession of Obedience to the Commandments; but Christ tried him by bidding him *go and sell all that he had, and give to the Poor, and come and take up his Cross, and follow him*; telling him *that then he should have Treasure in Heaven.* So he tried another that we read of *Matth.* viii. 20. He made a great Profession of Respect to Christ: Says he, *Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.* Christ immediately puts his Friendship to the Proof, by telling him, that *the Foxes had Holes, and the Birds of the Air had Nests, but that the Son of Man had not where to lay his Head.* And thus Christ is wont still to try professed Disciples in general, in his Providence. So the Seed sown in every Kind of Ground, stony Ground, thorny Ground, and good Ground, which in all appears alike, when it first springs up; yet is tried, and the Difference made to appear, by the burning Heat of the Sun.

Seeing therefore that these are the Things that God makes Use of to try us, 'tis undoubtedly the surest

Way

Way for us to pass a right Judgment on ourselves, to try ourselves by the same Things. These Trials of his are not for his Information, but for ours; therefore we ought to receive our Information from thence. The surest Way to know our Gold, is to look upon it and examine it in God's Furnace, where he tries it for that End, that we may see what it is. If we have a Mind to know whether a Building stands strong or no, we must look upon it when the Wind blows. If we would know whether that which appears in the Form of Wheat, has the real Substance of Wheat, or be only Chaff, we must observe it when it is winnowed. If we would know whether a Staff be strong, or a rotten broken Reed, we must observe it when it is leaned on, and Weight is borne upon it. If we would weigh ourselves justly, we must weigh ourselves in God's Scales, that he makes Use of to weigh us.* These Trials the Course of our Practice

*Dr. *Sibbs*, in his bruised Reed, says, "When Christ's Will "cometh in Competition with any worldly Loss or Gain, yet if "then, in that particular Case, the Heart will stoop to Christ, it is "a true Sign. For the truest Trial of the Power of Grace, is in "such particular Cases as touch us nearest; for there our Corruption "maketh the greatest Head. When Christ came home to the young "Man in the Gospel, he lost a Disciple of him."

Mr. *Flavel* speaks of a holy Practice under Trials, as the greatest Evidence of Grace: "No Man (says he) can say what he is, whether "his Graces be true or false, 'till they be tried and examined by "those Things which are to them as Fire to Gold." *Touchstone of Sincerity*. Chap. 4, Sect. 1. Again, speaking of great Difficulties and Sufferings in the Way of Duty, wherein a Person must actually part with what is dearest of a worldly Nature, or with his Duty; he says; "That such Sufferings as these will discover the Falseness and "Rottenness of Men's Hearts, cannot be doubted; if you consider "that this is the Fire designed by God for this very Use and Purpose, "to separate the Gold from the Dross. So you will find it, 1 Pet. "iv. 12. *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery Trial that "is to try you*, i. e: The very Design and Aim of Providence in "permitting and ordering them, is to try you. Upon this Account "you find the Hour of Persecution (in a suitable Notion) called the "Hour of Temptation or Probation, Rev. iii. 10. For then Pro-"fessors are sifted to the very Bran, searched to the very bottom "Principles

Practice are as it were the Ballances in which our Hearts are weighed, or in which Christ and the World, or Christ and his Competitors, as to the Esteem and Regard they have in our Hearts, are weighed, or are put into opposite Scales, by which there is Opportunity to see which preponderates. When a Man is brought to the dividing

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' Principles. This is *the Day that burns as an Oven; all that do* ' *wickedly, shall be as Stubble*, Mal. iv. 1. For in that Day the ' predominant Interest must appear and be discovered, it can be ' concealed no longer. *No Man can serve two Masters*, saith Christ, ' Luke xvi. 13. A Man may serve many Masters, if they all ' command the same Thing or Things subordinate to each other; ' but he cannot serve two Masters, if their Commands clash and ' interfere with each other: And such are the Commands of Christ ' and the Flesh in a suffering Hour:—Thus the two Interests come ' in full Opposition. And now have but Patience and wait a little, ' and you will discern which is predominant. A Dog follows two ' Men, while they both walk one Way, and you know not which ' of the two is his Master: Stay but a little, 'till this Path parts, ' and then you shall quickly see who is his Master. So it is in this ' Case." Ibid Chap. 8, Sect. 3. And in another Chapter he says, ' Great Numbers of Persons are deceived and destroyed by trusting ' to seeming untried Grace. This was the miserable Condition of ' the *Laodicean* Professors; They reckon'd themselves rich, but were ' really poor: All is not Gold that glisters: Their Gold (as they ' accounted it) was never tried in the Fire. If a Man's whole ' Estate lay in some precious Stone, suppose a rich Diamond, how ' is he concern'd to have it thoroughly tried, to see whether it will ' bear a smart Stroke with a Hammer, or fly like a *Bristol* Diamond!" Ibid Chap. 10, Sect. 3. Again in the same Place, " The Promises ' of Salvation are made over to tried Grace, and that only as will ' endure the Trial."

" The Lord will try you. God hath his trying Times: And ' they were never sent, but to discover who were Dross, who were ' Gold. And the main End of all God's Trials, is to discover ' this Truth that I am now pressing upon you. Some have a tho- ' rough Work; and now the Trial discovers the Truth, as in *Abra-* ' *ham*, Heb. xi. 17. Some have a superficial Work, and they fall in ' Trial, as in *Saul*; and it doth discover it was but an overly Work. ' For this is the Question God makes, Is it thorough or no? Ay, ' saith the carnal Heart; yes, saith a gracious Heart. Hence it is ' strange to see what Men will do when a Trial comes." *Shepard*'s Par. Part I. Pa. 219.

" There is an Hour of Temptation which tries Men, which will ' discover Men indeed." *Shepard*'s Parable, Part II. Pa. 60.

dividing of Paths, the one of which leads to Chriſt, and the other to the Objects of his Luſts, to ſee which Way he will go, or is brought, and as it were ſet between Chriſt and the World, Chriſt on the Right Hand, and the World on the left; ſo that if he goes to one he muſt leave the other, to ſee which his Heart moſt inclines to, or which preponderates in his Heart; this is juſt the ſame Thing as laying Chriſt and the World in two oppoſite Scales; and his going to the one, and leaving the other, is juſt the ſame Thing, as the ſinking of one Scale, and riſing of the other. A Man's Practice therefore, under the Trials of God's Providence, are as much the proper Experiment and Evidence of the ſuperior Inclination of his Heart, as the Motion of the Ballance, with different Weights, in oppoſite Scales, is the proper Experiment of the ſuperior Weight.

Argument III. Another Argument, that holy Practice, in the Senſe which has been explain'd, is the higheſt Kind of Evidence of the Truth of Grace to the Conſciences of Chriſtians, is, that in Practice, Grace, in Scripture Style, is ſaid to be *made perfect*, or to be *finiſhed*. So the Apoſtle *James* ſays, Jam. ii. 22. *Seeſt thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by Works was Faith made perfect*, or *finiſhed*, (as the Word in the Original properly ſignifies.) So the Love of God is ſaid to be made perfect, or finiſhed, in keeping his Commandments; 1 John ii. 4, 5. *He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him; but whoſo keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected.* The Commandment of Chriſt, which the Apoſtle has eſpecial Reſpect to, when he here ſpeaks of our keeping his Commandments, is (as I obſerved before) that great Commandment of his, which reſpects Deeds of Love to our Brethren; as appears by the following Verſes. Again, the Love of God is ſaid to be perfected, in the ſame Senſe, Chap. iv. 12. *If we love one another, God*

dwelleth

dwelleth in us, and his Love is perfected in us. Here doubtleſs the Apoſtle has ſtill Reſpect to loving one another, in the ſame Manner that he had explain'd in the preceeding Chapter, ſpeaking of loving one another, as a Sign of the Love of God, Verſe 17, 18. *Whoſo hath this World's Goods, and ſhutteth up his Bowels, &c. how dwelleth the Love of God in him? My little Children, let us not love in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed* (or in Work) *and in Truth.* By thus *loving in Work*, the Apoſtle ſays, *the Love of God is perfected in us.* Grace is ſaid to be perfected or finiſhed in holy Practice, as therein it is brought to its proper Effect, and to that Exerciſe which is the End of the Principle; the Tendency and Deſign of Grace, herein is reached, and its Operation compleated and crown'd. As the Tree is made perfect in the Fruit; 'tis not perfected in the Seed's being planted in the Ground; it is not perfected in the firſt quickning of the Seed, and in its putting forth Root and Sprout; nor is it perfected when it comes up out of the Ground; nor is it perfected in bringing forth Leaves; nor yet in putting forth Bloſſoms: But when it has brought forth good ripe Fruit, then it is perfected, therein it reaches its End, the Deſign of the Tree is finiſhed: All that belongs to the Tree is compleated and brought to its proper Effect in the Fruit: So is Grace in its practical Exerciſes. Grace is ſaid to be made perfect or finiſhed in its Work or Fruit, in the ſame Manner as 'tis ſaid of Sin, Jam. i. 15. *When Luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin, and Sin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth Death.* Here are three Steps; *firſt*, Sin in its Principle or Habit, in the Being of Luſt in the Heart; and *nextly*, here is its conceiving, conſiſting in the immanent Exerciſes of it in the Mind; and *laſtly*, here is the Fruit that was conceived actually brought forth, in the wicked Work and Practice. And this the Apoſtle calls the *finiſhing* or *perfecting* of Sin: For the Word in the Original is the ſame that is tranſlated *perfected* in thoſe foremention'd Places.

Now

Now certainly if it be ſo, if Grace be in this Manner made perfect, in its Fruit, if theſe practical Exerciſes of Grace are thoſe Exerciſes wherein Grace is brought to its proper Effect and End, and the Exerciſes wherein whatſoever belongs to its Deſign, Tendency and Operation is compleated and crown'd; then theſe Exerciſes muſt be the higheſt Evidences of Grace above all other Exerciſes. Certainly the proper Nature and Tendency of every Principle, muſt appear beſt and moſt fully, in its moſt perfect Exerciſes, or in thoſe Exerciſes wherein its Nature is moſt compleatly exerted, and its Tendency moſt fully anſwer'd and crown'd, in its proper Effect and End. If we would ſee the proper Nature of any Thing whatſoever, and ſee it in its full Diſtinction from other Things; let us look upon it in the finiſhing of it. The Apoſtle *James* ſays, *by Works is Faith made perfect*; and introduces this as an Argument to prove that Works are the chief Evidence of Faith, whereby the Sincerity of the Profeſſors of Faith is juſtified, Jam. ii. And the Apoſtle *John*, after he had once and again told us, that Love was made perfect in keeping Chriſt's Commandments, obſerves, 1 John iv. 18. *That perfect Love caſteth out Fear.* Meaning (at leaſt in Part) Love made perfect in this Senſe; agreeable to what he had ſaid in the foregoing Chapter, *That by loving in Deed or Work, we know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts*, Verſe 18, 19.

Argument IV. Another Thing which makes it evident, that holy Practice is the principal Evidence that we ought to make uſe of in judging both of our own and other's Sincerity, is, that this Evidence is above all others inſiſted on in Scripture. A common Acquantance with the Scripture, together with a little Attention and Obſervation, will be ſufficient to ſhew to any one, that this is ten Times more inſiſted on as a Note of true Piety, throughout the Scripture, from the Beginning of *Geneſis* to the End of *Revelations*, than any Thing elſe.

And

And in the New Teſtament, where Chriſt and his Apoſtles do expreſly, and of declared Purpoſe, lay down Signs of true Godlineſs, this is almoſt wholly inſiſted on. It may be obſerved, that Chriſt and his Apoſtles, do not only often ſay thoſe Things, in their Diſcourſing on the great Doctrines of Religion, which do ſhew what the Nature of true Godlineſs muſt be, or from whence the Nature and Signs of it may be inferr'd by juſt Conſequence, and often occaſionally mentions many Things which do appertain to Godlineſs; but they do alſo often, of ſet Purpoſe, give Signs and Marks for the Trial of Profeſſors, putting them upon trying themſelves by the Signs they give, introducing what they ſay with ſuch like Expreſſions as theſe; *By this you ſhall know that you know God*; *By this are manifeſt the Children of God and the Children of the Devil*; *He that hath this, builds on a good Foundation*; *He that hath it not, builds on the Sand*; *Hereby we ſhall aſſure our Hearts*; *He is the Man that loveth Chriſt*, &c. But I can find no Place, where either Chriſt or his Apoſtles do in this Manner give Signs of Godlineſs, (tho' the Places are many) but where chriſtian Practice is almoſt the only Thing inſiſted on. Indeed in many of theſe Places, *Love to the Brethren* is ſpoken of as a Sign to Godlineſs; and as I have obſerved before) there is no one virtuous Affection or Diſpoſition ſo often expreſly ſpoken of as a Sign of true Grace, as our having Love one to another; But then the Scriptures explain themſelves to intend chiefly this Love as exerciſed and expreſſed in Practice, or in Deeds of Love. So does the Apoſtle *John* (who above all others inſiſts on Love to the Brethren as a Sign of Godlineſs) moſt expreſly explain himſelf, in that 1 John iii. 14, &c; 'We know that we have paſſed from Death to Life, becauſe we love the Brethren. He that loveth not his Brother abideth in Death. Whoſo hath this World's Good, and ſeeth his Brother have Need, and ſhutteth up his Bowels of Compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him? My little

Children, let us love, not in Word, neither in Tongue, but in Deed (i. e. in Deeds of Love) and in Truth, and hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him.' So that when the Scripture ſo much inſiſts on our loving one another, as a great Sign of Godlineſs, we are not thereby to underſtand the immanent Workings of Affection which Men feel one to another, ſo much as the Soul's practiſing all the Duties of the ſecond Table of the Law; all which the new Teſtament tell us again and again, a true Love one to another comprehends; *Rom.* xiii. 8, and 10. *Gal.* v. 14. *Matth.* xxii. 39, 40. So that really, there is no Place in the new Teſtament, where the declared Deſign is to give Signs of Godlineſs, but that holy Practice, and keeping Chriſt's Commandments, is the Mark choſen out from all others to be inſiſted on. Which is an invincible Argument that it is the Chief of all the Evidences of Godlineſs: Unleſs we ſuppoſe that when Chriſt and his Apoſtles on Deſign, ſet themſelves about this Buſineſs of giving Signs, by which profeſſing Chriſtians in all Ages might determine their State, they did not know how to chooſe Signs ſo well as we could have choſen for 'em. But if we make the Word of Chriſt our Rule; then undoubtedly thoſe Marks which Chriſt and his Apoſtles did chiefly lay down, and give to us, that we might try ourſelves by them, thoſe ſame Marks we ought eſpecially to receive, and chiefly to make uſe of, in the Trial of ourſelves.* And ſurely thoſe Things which Chriſt and his Apoſtles chiefly inſiſted on in the Rules they gave, Miniſters ought chiefly to inſiſt on in the Rules they give. To inſiſt much on thoſe Things that the Scripture inſiſts little on, and to inſiſt very little on thoſe Things on which the Scripture inſiſts much, is a dangerous Thing; becauſe it is going out

* "It is a ſure Rule, (ſays Dr. *Preſton*) that what the Scriptures "beſtow much Words on, we ſhould have much Tho'ts on; and "what the Holy Ghoſt urgeth moſt, we ſhould prize moſt." *Churches Carriages.*

out of God's Way, and is to judge ourſelves, and guide others, in an unſcriptural Manner. God knew which Way of leading and guiding Souls was ſafeſt and beſt for them: He inſiſted ſo much on ſome Things, becauſe he knew it to be needful that they ſhould be inſiſted on; and let other Things more alone, as a wiſe God, becauſe he knew it was not beſt for us, ſo much as to lay the Weight of the Trial there. As the Sabbath was made for Man, ſo the Scriptures were made for Man; and they are by infinite Wiſdom fitted for our Uſe and Benefit. We ſhould therefore make them our Guide in all Things, in our Thoughts of Religion, and of ourſelves. And for us to make that great which the Scripture makes little, and that little which the Scripture makes great, tends to give us a monſtrous Idea of Religion; and (at leaſt indirectly and gradually) to lead us wholly away from the right Rule, and from a right Opinion of ourſelves, and to eſtabliſh Deluſion and Hypocriſy.

Argument V. Chriſtian Practice *is plainly ſpoken of* in the *Word of God*, as the main Evidence of the Truth of Grace, not only to others, but to Men's own Conſciences. It is not only more ſpoken of and inſiſted on than other Signs, but in many Places where it is ſpoken of, it is repreſented as the Chief of all Evidences. This is plain in the Manner of Expreſſion from Time to Time. If God were now to ſpeak from Heaven to reſolve our Doubts concerning Signs of Godlineſs, and ſhould give ſome particular Sign, that by it all might know whether they were ſincerely Godly or not, with ſuch emphatical Expreſſions as theſe, The Man that has ſuch a Qualification or Mark, *That is the Man that is a true Saint*; *that is the very Man*; *by this you may know, this is the Thing by which it is manifeſt who are Saints and who are Sinners, ſuch Men as theſe are Saints indeed*; Should not we look upon it as a Thing beyond Doubt, that this was given as a ſpecial, and eminently

distinguishing Note of true Godliness? But this is the very Case with Respect to the Sign of Grace I am speaking of; God has again and again utter'd himself in his Word in this very Manner, concerning christian Practice; as John xiv. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them,* HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME. This Christ in this Place gives to the Disciples, not so much to guide 'em in judging of others, but to apply to themselves for their own Comfort after his Departure, as appears by every Word of the Context. And by the Way I would observe, that not only the Emphasis with which Christ utters himself is remarkable, but also his so much insisting on, and repeating the Matter, as he does in the Context; Ver. 15. 'If ye love me, keep my Commandments.' Ver. 23. 'If a Man love me, he will keep my Words.' And Ver. 24. 'He that loveth me not, keepeth not my Sayings.' And in the next Chapter over and over; Ver. 2. 'Every Branch in me that beareth not Fruit, he taketh away; and every Branch that beareth Fruit, he purgeth.' Ver. 8. 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much Fruit, so shall ye be my Disciples.' Ver. 14. Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' We have this Mark laid down with the same Emphasis again John viii. 31. 'If ye continue in my Word, THEN ye are my Disciples INDEED.' And again 1 John ii. 3. "HEREBY we do know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments.' And Ver. 5. 'Whoso keepeth his Word, IN HIM VERILY is the Love of God perfected; HEREBY know we that we are in him.' And Chap. iii. 18, 19. Let us Love in Deed and in Truth, HEREBY we know that we are of the Truth.' What is translated *hereby*, would have been a little more emphatical, if it had been render'd more literally from the Original, BY THIS *we do know*.---And how evidently is holy Practice spoken of as the grand Note of Distinction between the Children of God, and the Children of the Devil, in Ver. 10. of the same Chapter? IN THIS the Children of God are manifest,

manifeſt, and the Children of the Devil.' Speaking of a holy, and a wicked Practice, as may be ſeen in all the Context; as Ver. 3. 'Every Man that has this hope in him, purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure.' Ver. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. 'Whoſoever abideth in him ſinneth not; whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him nor known him. Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that doth Righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous; he that committeth Sin is of the Devil. Whoſoever is born of God ſinneth not. Whoſoever doth not Righteouſneſs is not of God. So we have the like Emphaſis 2 John vi. 'THIS IS LOVE, that we walk after his Commandments.' That is (as we muſt underſtand it) *This is the proper Evidence of Love.* So 1 John v. 3. 'THIS IS THE LOVE OF GOD, that we keep his Commandments.' So the Apoſtle *James*, ſpeaking of the proper Evidences of true and pure Religion, ſays, Jam. i. 27. 'Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is THIS, to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the World.' We have the like emphatical Expreſſions uſed about the ſame Thing in the old Teſtament; Job. xxviii. 28. 'And unto Man he ſaid, Behold the Fear of the Lord, that is Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil is Underſtanding.' Jer. xxii. 15, 16. 'Did not thy Father eat and drink, and do Judgment and Juſtice?---He judged the Cauſe of the Poor and Needy: Was not this to know me? ſaith the Lord.' Pſal. xxxiv. 11, &c. 'Come ye Children unto me, and I will teach you the Fear of the Lord.---Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from ſpeaking Guile; depart from Evil, and do Good, ſeek Peace, and purſue it.' Pſal. xv. at the Beginning, 'Who ſhall abide in thy Tabernacle? Who ſhall dwell in his holy Hill? He that walketh uprightly, &c.' Pſal. xxiv, 3, 4. 'Who ſhall aſcend into the Hill of the Lord? And who ſhall ſtand in thy holy Place? He that hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart, &c.' Pſal. cxix. 1. 'Bleſſed are the Undefiled in the Way, who

walk

walk in the Law of the Lord.' Ver. 6. 'Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have Reſpect to all thy Commandments.' Prov. viii. 13. 'The Fear of the Lord is to hate Evil.

So the Scripture never uſes ſuch emphatical Expreſſions concerning any other Signs of Hypocriſy, and Unſoundneſs of Heart, as concerning an unholy Practice. So Gal. vi. 7. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: For whatſoever a Man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.' 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. 'Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, &c. ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.' Eph. v. 5. 6. 'For this know, that no Whoremonger, nor unclean Perſon, &c. hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God: Let no Man deceive you with vain Words:' 1 John iii. 7, 8. 'Little Children, let no Man deceive you; he that doth Righteouſneſs is righteous, even as he is righteous: He that committeth Sin is of the Devil.' Chap. ii. 4. 'He that ſaith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him.' And Chap. i. 6. 'If we ſay we have Fellowſhip with him, and walk in Darkneſs, we lie, and do not the Truth.' Jam. i. 27. 'If any Man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, this Man's Religion is vain.' Chap. iii. 14, 15. 'If ye have better Envying and Strife in your Hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the Truth: This Wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.' Pſal. cxxv. 5. 'As for ſuch as turn aſide to their crooked Ways, the Lord ſhall lead them forth with the Workers of Iniquity.' Iſai. xxxv. 8. 'An high Way ſhall be there, and it ſhall be called the Way of Holineſs; the Unclean ſhall not paſs over it.' Rev. xxi. 27. 'And there ſhall in no wiſe enter into it, whatſoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lie:' And in many Places. 'Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work Iniquity.'

Argument

Argument VI. Another Thing which makes it evident, that holy Practice is the chief of all the Signs of the Sincerity of Profeſſors, not only to the World, but to their own Conſciences, is, that this is the grand Evidence which will hereafter be made Uſe of, before the Judgment Seat of God; according to which his Judgment will be regulated, and the State of every Profeſſor of Religion unalterably determined. In the future Judgment, there will be an open Trial of Profeſſors; and Evidences will be made uſe of in the Judgment. For God's future judging of Men, in order to their eternal Retribution, will not be his trying, and finding out, and paſſing a Judgment upon the State of Men's Hearts, in his own Mind; but it will be a declarative Judgment: And the End of it will be, not God's forming a Judgment within himſelf, but the Manifeſtation of his Judgment, and the Righteouſneſs of it, to Men's own Conſciences, and to the World. And therefore the Day of Judgment is called *the Day of the* Revelation *of the righteous Judgment of God*, Rom. ii. 5. And the End of God's future Trial and Judgment of Men, as to the Part that each one in particular is to have in the Judgment, will be eſpecially the clear Manifeſtation of God's righteous Judgment, with Reſpect to him, to his Conſcience: As his manifeſt by *Matth.* xviii. 31, to the End. Chap. xx, 8, 15. Chap. xxii. 11, 12, 13. Chap. xxv. 19, 30, and Verſe 35, to the End. *Luke* xix. 15, 23. And therefore tho' God needs no Medium, whereby to make the Truth evident to himſelf, yet Evidences will be made uſe of in his future judging of Men. And doubtleſs the Evidences that will be made uſe of in their Trial, will be ſuch as will be beſt fitted to ſerve the Ends of the Judgment; *viz.* the Manifeſtation of the righteous Judgment of God, not only to the World, but to Men's own Conſciences. But the Scriptures do abundantly teach us, that the grand Evidences which the Judge will make uſe of in the Trial, for theſe Ends, according to which the Judgment of every one ſhall be

regulated

regulated, and the irreverſible Sentence paſs'd, will be Men's Works, or Practice, here in this World; Rev. xx. 12. 'And I ſaw the Dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God; and the Books were opened---And the Dead were judged out of thoſe Things which were written in the Books, according to their Works.' So Verſe 13. 'And the Sea gave up the Dead which were in it, and Death and Hell gave up the Dead which were in them; and they were judged, every Man, according to their Work.' 2 Cor. v. 10. 'For we muſt all appear before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the Things done in the Body, whether it be good or bad.' So Men's Practice is the only Evidence, that Chriſt repreſents the future Judgment as regulated by, in that moſt particular Deſcription of the Day of Judgment, which we have in the holy Bible, *Matth.* xxv. at the latter End. See alſo Rom. ii. 6,---13. Jer. xvii. 10. Job. xxxiv. 11. Prov. xxiv. 12. Jer. xxxii. 19. Rev. xxii. 12. Matth. xvi. 27. Rev. ii. 23. Ezek. xxxiii. 20. 1 Pet. i. 17. The Judge at the Day of Judgment, won't (for the Conviction of Men's own Conſciences, and to manifeſt 'em to the World) go about to examine Men, as to the Method of their Experiences, or ſet every Man to tell his Story of the Manner of his Converſion; but his Works will be brought forth, as Evidences of what he is, what he has done in Darkneſs and in Light; Eccl. xii. 14. 'For God will bring every Work into Judgment, with every ſecret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.' In the Trial that Profeſſors ſhall be the Subjects of, in the future Judgment, God will make uſe of the ſame Evidences, to manifeſt 'em to themſelves and to the World, which he makes uſe of to manifeſt them, in the Temptations or Trials of his Providence here, *viz.* Their Practice, in Caſes wherein Chriſt and other Things come into actual and immediate Competition. At the Day of Judgment, God, for the Manifeſtation of his righteous Judgment, will weigh Profeſſors in a Balance that is viſible.

visible. And the Balance will be the same that he weighs Men in now; which has been already described.

Hence we may undoubtedly infer, that Men's Works (taken in the Sense that has been explain'd) are the highest Evidences, by which they ought to try themselves. Certainly that which our supreme Judge will chiefly make use of, to judge us by, when we come to stand before him, we should chiefly make use of, to judge ourselves by.* If it had not been revealed in what Manner, and by what Evidence the Judge would proceed with us hereafter; how natural would it be for one to say, "O that I knew what Token God will chiefly "look for and insist upon in the last and decisive Judg-"ment; and which he expects that all should be able to "produce who would then be accepted of him, and ac-"cording to which Sentence shall be pass'd; that I might "know what Token or Evidence especially to look at "and seek after now; as I would be sure not to fail then." And seeing God has so plainly and abundantly revealed what this Token or Evidence is; surely if we act wisely, we shall regard it as of the greatest Importance.

Now from all that has been said, I think it to be abundantly manifest, that christian Practice is the most proper Evidence of the gracious Sincerity of Professors, to themselves and others; and the chief of all the Marks of Grace, the Sign of Signs, and the Evidence of Evidences, that which seals and crowns all other Signs.---- I had rather have the Testimony of my Conscience, that I have such a Saying of my supreme Judge on my Side, as that, John. xiv. 21. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me*; than the Judgment,

* "That which God maketh a Rule of his own Judgment, as that "by which he judgeth of every Man, that is a sure Rule for every "Man to judge himself by. That which we shall be judged by at "the last Day, is a sure Rule to apply to ourselves for the present. "Now by our Obedience and Works, he judgeth us. *He will give to every Man according to his Works.*" Dr *Preston*'s Churches Carriages.

Judgment, and fulleſt Approbation, of all the wiſe, ſound and experienced Divines, that have lived this thouſand Years, on the moſt exact and critical Examination of my Experiences, as to the Manner of my Converſion. Not that there are no other good Evidences of a State of Grace but this. There may be other Exerciſes of Grace, beſides theſe efficient Exerciſes, which the Saints may have in Contemplation, that may be very ſatisfying to them: But yet this is the chief and moſt proper Evidence. There may be ſeveral good Evidences that a Tree is a Fig-Tree; but the higheſt and moſt proper Evidence of it, is, that it actually bears Figs. 'Tis poſſible that a Man may have a good Aſſurance of a State of Grace, at his firſt Converſion, before he has had Opportunity to gain Aſſurance, by this great Evidence I am ſpeaking of.---If a Man hears that a great Treaſure is offered him, in a diſtant Place, on Condition that he will prize it ſo much, as to be willing to leave what he poſſeſſes at home, and go a Journey for it, over the Rocks and Mountains that are in the Way, to the Place where it is; 'tis poſſible the Man may be well aſſured, that he values the Treaſure to the Degree ſpoken of, as ſoon as the Offer is made him; he may feel a Willingneſs to go for the Treaſure, within him, beyond all Doubt: But yet, this don't hinder but that his actual going for it is the higheſt and moſt proper Evidence of his being willing, not only to others, but to himſelf. But then as an Evidence to himſelf, his outward Actions, and the Motions of his Body in his Journey, are not conſidered alone, excluſive of the Action of his Mind, and a Conſciouſneſs within himſelf, of the Thing that moves him, and the End he goes for; otherwiſe, his bodily Motion is no Evidence to him, of his prizing the Treaſure. In ſuch a Manner is chriſtian Practice the moſt proper Evidence of a ſaving Value of *the Pearl of great Price, and Treaſure hid in the Field.*

Chriſtian

Christian Practice is the Sign of Signs, in this Sense that it is the great Evidence, which confirms and crowns all other Signs of Godliness. There is no one Grace of the Spirit of God, but that christian Practice is the most proper Evidence of the Truth of it. As it is with the Members of our Bodies, and all our Utensils, the proper Proof of the Soundness and Goodness of 'em, is in the Use of 'em; so it is with our Graces (which are given to be used in Practice, as much as our Hands and Feet, or the Tools with which we work, or the Arms with which we fight) the proper Trial and Proof of them is in their Exercise in Practice. Most of the Things we use, are serviceable to us, and so have their Serviceableness proved, in some Pressure, Straining, Agitation, or Collision. So it is with a Bow, a Sword, an Ax, a Saw, a Cord, a Chain, a Staff, a Foot, a Tooth, &c. And they that are so weak, as not to bear the Strain or Pressure we need to put them to, are good for nothing. So it is with all the Virtues of the Mind. The proper Trial and Proof of them is in being exercised under those Temptations and Trials that God brings us under, in the Course of his Providence, and in being put to such Service as strains hard upon the Principles of Nature.

Practice is the proper Proof of the true and saving *Knowledge of God*; as appears by that of the Apostle already mention'd, *Hereby do we know that we know him, that we keep his Commandments.* 'Tis in vain for us to *profess that we know God*, if *in Works we deny him.* Tit. i. 16. And if we *know God, but glorify him not as God*, our Knowlege will only condemn us, and not save us, Rom. i. 21. The great Note of that Knowledge which saves and makes happy, is that it is practical; John xiii. 17. *If ye know these Things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Job. xxviii. 28. *To depart from Evil is Understanding.*

Holy Practice is the proper Evidence of *Repentance.* When the *Jews* professed Repentance, when they came confessing their Sins, to *John*, preaching the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins; he directed

'em

'em to the right Way of getting and exhibiting proper Evidences of the Truth of their Repentance, when he said to 'em, *Bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*, Matth. iii. 8. Which was agreable to the Practice of the Apostle *Paul*, see Acts xxvi. 20. Pardon and Mercy are from time to time promised to him who has this Evidence of true Repentance, that he forsakes his Sin; *Prov.* xxviii. 13, and *Isai.* lv. 7; and many other Places.

Holy Practice is the proper Evidence of a *saving Faith*. 'Tis evident that the Apostle *James* speaks of Works, as what does eminently justify Faith, or (which is the same Thing) justify the Professors of Faith, and vindicate and manifest the Sincerity of their Profession, not only to the World, but to their own Consciences: As is evident by the Instance he gives of *Abraham*, Jam. ii. 21,---24. And in Verse 20, and 26, he speaks of the practical and working Nature of Faith, as the very Life and Soul of it; in the same Manner, that the active Nature and Substance, which is in the Body of a Man, is the Life and Soul of that. And if so, doubtless Practice is the proper Evidence of the Life and Soul of true Faith, by which it is distinguished from a dead Faith. For doubtless, Practice is the most proper Evidence of a practical Nature, and Operation the most proper Evidence of an operative Nature.

Practice is the best Evidence of a saving *Belief of the Truth*. That is spoken of as the proper Evidence of the *Truth's being* in a professing Christian, that *he walks in the Truth*, 3 John iii, *I rejoiced greatly, when the Brethren came and testified of the Truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the Truth*.

Practice is the most proper Evidence of a true *coming to Christ*, and *accepting* of, and *closing* with him. A true and saving Coming to Christ, is (as Christ often teaches) a Coming so, as to forsake all for him. And as was observed before, to forsake all for Christ in Heart, is the same Thing as to have a Heart actually to forsake all; but the proper Evidence of having a Heart actually to

forsake

forſake all, is indeed actually to forſake all, ſo far as called to it. If a Prince makes Suit to a Woman in a far Country, that ſhe would forſake her own People, and Father's Houſe, and come to him, to be his Bride; the proper Evidence of the Compliance of her Heart with the King's Suit, is her actually forſaking her own People, and Father's Houſe, and coming to him. By this, her Compliance with the King's Suit, is made perfect, in the ſame Senſe, that the Apoſtle *James* ſays, *by Works is Faith made perfect.** Chriſt promiſes us eternal Life, on Condition of our Coming to him: but it is ſuch a Coming as he directed the young Man to, who came to enquire: *What he ſhall do, that he may have eternal Life*; Chriſt bid him *Go, and ſell all that he had, and come to him, and follow him.* If he had conſented in his Heart to the Propoſal, (and had therein come to Chriſt in his Heart) the proper Evidence of it would have been his doing of it: And therein his coming to Chriſt would have been made perfect. When Chriſt called *Levi* the Publican, when ſitting at the Receipt of Cuſtom, and in the midſt of his worldly Gains; the cloſing of *Levi*'s Heart with this Invitation of his Saviour, to come to him, was manifeſted, and made perfect, by his actually riſing up, leaving all, and following him, *Luke* v. 27. 28. Chriſt and other Things, are ſet before us together, for us practically to cleave to one, and forſake the other: In ſuch a Caſe, a practical Cleaving to Chriſt, is a practical *Acceptance* of Chriſt; as much as a Beggar's reaching

* "Our real taking of Chriſt, appears in our Actions and Works; "Iſai. i. 19. *If ye conſent and obey, ye ſhall eat the good Things of the "Land.* That is, If ye will conſent to take Jehovah for your Lord "and King; *If ye give Conſent*; there is the firſt Thing; But that is "not enough; *but if ye alſo obey.* The Conſent that ſtandeth in the "inward Act of the Mind, the Truth of it will be ſeen in your "Obedience, in the Acts of your Lives. *If ye conſent and obey, ye "ſhall eat the good Things of the Land*; that is, you ſhall take of all "that he hath that is convenient for you; For then you are married "to him in Truth, and have an Intereſt in all his Goods." Dr. *Preſton* Church's Carriage.

reaching out his Hand, and taking a Gift that is offer'd, is his practical Acceptance of the Gift. Yea, that Act of the Soul that is in cleaving to Christ in Practice, is itself the most perfect coming of the Soul to Christ.

Practice is the most proper Evidence of *Trusting in Christ for Salvation.* The proper Signification of the Word *Trust*, according to the more ordinary Use of it, both in common Speech, and in the holy Scriptures, is the Emboldening and Encouragement of a Person's Mind, to run some Venture in Practice, or in something that he does, on the Credit of another's Sufficiency and Faithfulness. And therefore the proper Evidence of his Trusting, is *the Venture he runs in what he does.* He is not properly said to run any Venture, in a Dependance on any Thing, that does nothing on that Dependance, or whose Practice is no otherwise than if he had no Dependance. For a Man to run a Venture, on a Dependance on another, is for him to do something from that Dependance, by which he seems to expose himself, and which he would not do, were it not for that Dependance. And therefore it is in complying with the Difficulties, and seeming Dangers of christian Practice, in a Dependance on Christ's Sufficiency and Faithfulness to bestow eternal Life, that Persons are said to venture themselves upon Christ, and trust in him for Happiness and Life. They depend on such Promises as that, Matth. x. 39. *He that loseth his Life for my Sake, shall find it.* And so they part with all, and venture their All, in a Dependance on Christ's Sufficiency and Truth. And this is the Scripture Notion of Trusting in Christ, in the Exercise of a saving Faith in him. Thus *Abraham*, the Father of Believers, trusted in Christ, and by Faith, forsook his own Country, in a Reliance on the Covenant of Grace God established with him, *Heb.* xi. 8, 9. Thus also *Moses*, *By Faith, refused to be called the Son of* Pharaoh's *Daughter, chusing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season*, Heb. xi. 23, *&c.* So *by Faith*, others exposed

poſed themſelves to be *ſtoned*, and *ſawn in ſunder*, or *ſlain with the Sword*; endured the *Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings*, *Bonds and Impriſonments*, *and wandered about in Sheep-ſkins and Goat-ſkins*, *being deſtitute*, *afflicted*, *tormented*. And in this Senſe the Apoſtle *Paul*, by Faith, truſted in Chriſt, and committed himſelf to him, venturing himſelf, and his whole Intereſt, in a Dependance on the Ability and Faithfulneſs of his Redeemer, under great Perſecutions, and in ſuffering the Loſs of all Things; 2 Tim. i. 12. *For the which Cauſe I alſo ſuffer theſe Things*, *nevertheleſs I am not aſhamed*; *for I know whom I have believed*; *and I am perſuaded*, *that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him*, *againſt that Day*.

If a Man ſhould have Word brought him from the King of a diſtant Land, that he intended to make him his Heir, if upon receiving the Tydings, he immediately leaves his native Land, and Friends, and all that he has in the World, to go to that Country, in a Dependance on what he hears; then he may be ſaid to venture himſelf, and all that he has in the World upon it. But if he only ſits ſtill, and hopes for the promiſed Benefit, inwardly pleaſing himſelf with the Thoughts of it; he can't properly be ſaid to venture himſelf upon it; he runs no Venture in the Caſe; he does nothing, otherwiſe than he would do, if he had received no ſuch Tidings, by which he would be expoſed to any Suffering, in Caſe all ſhould fail. So he that on the Credit of what he hears of a future World, and in a Dependance on the Report of the Goſpel, concerning Life and Immortality, forſakes all, or does ſo at leaſt ſo far as there is Occaſion, making every Thing entirely give Place to his eternal Intereſt; he, and he only, may properly be ſaid to venture himſelf on the Report of the Goſpel. And this is the proper Evidence of a true Truſt in Chriſt for Salvation.

Practice is the proper Evidence of a *gracious Love*, both to God and Men. The Texts that plainly teach

this,

this, have been so often mention'd already, that it is needless to repeat them.

Practice is the proper Evidence of *Humility*. That Expression and Manifestation of Heart, which God speaks of, as the great Expression of it, that he insists on; That we should look upon as the proper Expression and Manifestation of it: But this is *walking humbly*; Micah. vi. 8. "he hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good, and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love Mercy, and to *walk humbly* with thy God."

This is also the proper Evidence of the true *Fear of God*. Prov. viii. 13. "The Fear of the Lord is to hate Evil." Psal. xxxiv. 11, &c. "Come ye Children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the Fear of the Lord.---Keep thy Tongue from Evil, and thy Lips from speaking Guile; depart from Evil and do Good, seek Peace, and pursue it." Prov. iii. 7. "Fear the Lord, and depart from Evil." Prov. xvi. 6. "By the Fear of the Lord, Men depart from Evil." Job i. 8. "Hast thou considered my Servant *Job*,---a perfect and an upright Man, one that feareth God, and escheweth Evil? And still he holdeth fast his Integrity, although thou movedst me against him." Psal. xxxvi. 1. "The Transgression of the Wicked, saith within my Heart, there is no Fear of God before his Eyes."

So Practice, in rendering again according to Benefits received, is the proper Evidence of true *Thankfulness*. Psal. cxvi. 12. "What shall I render to the Lord, for all his Benefits towards me?" 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. "But *Hezekiah* rendered not again according to the Benefit done unto him." Paying our Vows unto God, and ordering our Conversation aright, seem to be spoken of, as the proper Expression and Evidence of true Thankfulness, in the 50th Psalm, Verse 14. "Offer unto God Thanksgiving, and pay thy Vows unto the Most High." Verse 23. "Whoso offereth Praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his Conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God."

So

So the proper Evidence of *gracious Desires and Longings*, and that which distinguishes them from those that are false and vain, is that they are not idle Wishes and Wouldings, like *Balaam*'s; but effectual in Practice, to stir up Persons earnestly and thoroughly to seek the Things they long for. Psal. xxvii. 4. 'One Thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.' Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: My Soul thirsteth for thee; my Flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty Land, where no Water is, to see thy Power and thy Glory.' Verse 8. 'My Soul followeth hard after thee.' Cant. i. 4. 'Draw me, we will run after thee.'

Practice is the proper Evidence of a gracious *Hope*. 1 John iii. 3. *Every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.* Patient Continuance in well doing, through the Difficulties and Trials of the christian Course, is often mention'd as the proper Expression and Fruit of a christian Hope. 1 Thes. i. 3. *Remembering without ceasing, your Work of Faith, and Labour of Love, and Patience of Hope.* 1 Pet. i. 13, 14. *Wherefore, gird up the Loins of your Mind, be sober, and Hope to the End; for the Grace that is to be brought unto you, at the Revelation of Jesus Christ, as obedient Children*, &c. Psal cxix. 166. *Lord, I have hoped in thy Salvation, and done thy Commandments.* Psal. lxxviii. 7. *That they might set their Hope in God, and not forget the Works of the Lord, but keep his Commandments,*

A chearful Practice of our Duty and doing the Will of God, is the proper Evidence of a truly *holy Joy*. Isai. xiv. 5, *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh Righteousness.* Psal. cxix. 111, 112. *Thy Testimonies have I taken for my Heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my Heart: I have inclined my Heart to perform thy Statutes alway, even unto the End.* Verse 14. *I have rejoiced in the Way of thy Testimonies, as much as in all Riches.* 2 Cor. xiii. 6. *Charity rejoiceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.* 2 Cor. viii. 2. *The abundance of their Joy, abounded to the Riches of their Liberality.*

Practice also is the proper Evidence of christian *Fortitude*. The Trial of a good Soldier, is not in his Chimney Corner, but in the Field of Battle; 1 *Cor.* ix. 25, 26. 2 *Tim.* ii. 3, 4, 5.

And as the Fruit of holy Practice is the chief Evidence of the Truth of Grace; so the Degree in which Experiences have Influence on a Person's Practice, is the surest Evidence of the Degree of that which is spiritual and divine in his Experiences. Whatever Pretences Persons may make to great Discoveries, great Love and Joys, they are no further to be regarded, than they have Influence on their Practice. Not but that Allowances must be made for the natural Temper. But that don't hinder, but that the Degree of Grace is justly measured, by the Degree of the Effect in Practice. For the Effect of Grace is as great, and the Alteration is as remarkable, in a Person of a very ill natural Temper, as another. Although a Person of such a Temper, will not behave himself so well, with the same Degree of Grace, as another; the Diversity from what was before Conversion, may be as great; because a Person of a good natural Temper, did not behave himself so ill, before Conversion.

Thus I have endeavoured to represent the Evidence there is, that christian Practice is *the chief* of all the Signs of saving Grace. And before I conclude this Discourse, I would say something briefly, in Answer to two Objections, that may possibly be made by some, against what has been said upon this Head.

Object. 1. Some may be ready to say, This seems to be contrary to that Opinion, so much received among good People; that Professors should judge of their State, chiefly by their inward Experience, and that spiritual Experiences are the main Evidences of true Grace.

I answer, 'Tis doubtless a true Opinion, and justly much received among good People, that Professors should chiefly judge of their State by their Experience.

But

But it is a great Miſtake, that what has been ſaid is at all contrary to that Opinion. The chief Sign of Grace to the Conſciences of Chriſtians, being chriſtian Practice, in the Senſe that has been explain'd, and according to what has been ſhewn to be the true Notion of chriſtian Practice, is not at all inconſiſtent with chriſtian Experience being the chief Evidence of Grace. Chriſtian or holy Practice is ſpiritual Practice; and that is not the Motion of a Body, that knows not how, nor when, nor wherefore it moves: But ſpiritual Practice in Man, is the Practice of a Spirit and Body jointly, or the Practice of a Spirit, animating, commanding and actuating a Body, to which it is united, and over which it has Power given it by the Creator. And therefore the main Thing in this holy Practice, is the holy Acts of the Mind, directing and governing the Motions of the Body. And the Motions of the Body are to be looked upon as belonging to chriſtian Practice, only ſecondarily, and as they are dependent and conſequent on the Acts of the Soul. The Exerciſes of the Grace that Chriſtians find, or are conſcious to, within themſelves, are what they *experience* within themſelves; and herein therefore lies chriſtian Experience: And this chriſtian Experience, conſiſts as much in thoſe operative Exerciſes of Grace in the Will, that are immediately concerned in the Management of the Behaviour of the Body, as in other Exerciſes. Theſe inward Exerciſes, are not the leſs a Part of chriſtian Experience, becauſe they have outward Behaviour immediately connected with them. A ſtrong Act of Love to God, is not the leſs a Part of ſpiritual Experience, becauſe it is the Act that immediately produces and effects ſome ſelf-denying and expenſive outward Action, which is much to the Honour and Glory of God.

To ſpeak of chriſtian Experience and Practice, as if they were two Things, properly and entirely diſtinct, is to make a Diſtinction without Conſideration or Reaſon. Indeed all chriſtian Experience is not properly called

Practice; but all chriſtian Practice is properly Experience. And the Diſtinction that is made between them, is not only an unreaſonable, but an unſcriptural Diſtinction. Holy Practice is one Kind or Part of chriſtian Experience; and both Reaſon and Scripture repreſent it as the chief, and moſt important, and moſt diſtinguiſhing Part of it. So it is repreſented in Jer. xxii. 15, 16. 'Did not thy Father eat and drink, and do Juſtice and Judgment?---He judged the Cauſe of the Poor and Needy: ---Was not this to know me? ſaith the Lord.' Our inward Acquaintance with God, ſurely belongs to the Head of experimental Religion; but this God repreſents, as conſiſting chiefly in that Experience which there is in holy Practice. So the Exerciſes of thoſe Graces of the Love of God, and the Fear of God, are a Part of experimental Religion; but theſe the Scripture repreſents as conſiſting chiefly in Practice, in thoſe forementioned Texts. 1 John v. 3. 'This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments.' 2 John vi. 'This is Love, that we walk after his Commandments.' Pſal. xxxiv. 11, *&c.* 'Come, ye Children, and I will teach you the Fear of the Lord:---Depart from Evil, and do Good.' Such Experiences as theſe *Hezekiah* took Comfort in chiefly; on his ſick Bed: When he ſaid, 'Remember, O Lord, I beſeech thee, how I have walked before thee, in Truth, and with a perfect Heart.' And ſuch Experiences as theſe, the Pſalmiſt chiefly inſiſts upon, in the 119th Pſalm, and elſewhere. Such Experiences as theſe, the Apoſtle *Paul* mainly inſiſts upon, when he ſpeaks of his Experiences in his Epiſtles; as Rom. i. 9. 'God is my Witneſs, whom I ſerve with my Spirit, in the Goſpel of his Son.'---2 Cor. i. 12. 'for our rejoicing is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience,---that by the Grace of God, we have had our Converſation in the World.' Chap. iv. 13. 'We having the ſame Spirit of Faith: According as it is written, I have believed, and therefore have I ſpoken; we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak.' Chap. v. 7. 'We walk by Faith, not by

by Sight.' Verſe 14. 'The Love of Chriſt conſtraineth us.' Chap. vi. 4,---7. 'In all Things approving ourſelves as the Miniſters of God, in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Neceſſities, in Diſtreſſes,---in Labours, in Watchings, in Faſtings; by Pureneſs, by Knowledge, by Kindneſs, by the Holy Ghoſt, by Love unfeigned,---by the Power of God.' 'Gal. ii. 20. 'I am crucified with Chriſt. Nevertheleſs, I live: Yet not I; but Chriſt liveth in me. And the Life which I now live in the Fleſh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God.' Phil. iii. 7, 8. 'But what Things were gain to me, thoſe I counted loſs for Chriſt: Yea doubtleſs, and I count all Things but loſs for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, and do count them but Dung that I may win Chriſt.' Col i. 29. 'Whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving, according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.' 1 Theſſ. ii. 2. 'We are bold in our God, to ſpeak unto you the Goſpel of God, with much Contention.' Verſes 8, 9, 10. 'Being affectionately deſirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Goſpel of God only, but alſo our own Souls; becauſe ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, Brethren, our Labour and Travail, labouring Night and Day.---Ye are Witneſſes, and God alſo, how holily, and juſtly, and unblameably we behaved ourſelves among you.' And ſuch Experiences as theſe, they were, that this bleſſed Apoſtle chiefly comforted himſelf in the Conſideration of, when he was going to Martyrdom. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. 'For I am now ready to be offered, and the Time of my Departure is at Hand. I have fought a good Fight: I have finiſhed my Courſe: I have kept the Faith.'

And not only does the moſt important and diſtinguiſhing Part of chriſtian Experience, lie in ſpiritual Practice; but ſuch is the Nature of that ſort of Exerciſes of Grace, wherein ſpiritual Practice conſiſts, that nothing is ſo properly called by the Name of *experimental Religion.* For that Experience which is in theſe Exerciſes of Grace, that are found, and prove effectual, at the very Point of Tri-

al,

al, wherein God proves which we will actually cleave to, whether Chriſt or our Luſts, are as has been ſhown already, the proper *Experiment* of the Truth and Power of our Godlineſs; wherein it's victorious Power and Efficacy, in producing it's proper Effect, and reaching it's End, is found *by Experience*. This is properly chriſtian Experience, wherein the Saints have Opportunity to ſee, by actual *Experience and Trial*, whether they have a Heart to do the Will of God, and to forſake other Things for Chriſt, or no. As that is called experimental Philoſophy, which brings Opinions and Notions to the Teſt of Fact; ſo is that properly called experimental Religion, which brings religious Affections and Intentions to the like Teſt.

There is a ſort of external religious Practice, wherein is no inward Experience; which no Account is made of in the Sight of God; but it is eſteemed good for nothing. And there is what is called Experience, that is without Practice, being neither accompanied, nor followed with a chriſtian Behaviour; and this is worſe than nothing. Many Perſons ſeem to have wrong Notions of chriſtian Experience, and ſpiritual Light and Diſcoveries. Whenever a Perſon finds within him, an Heart to treat God as God, at the Time that he has the Trial; and finds his Diſpoſition effectual in the Experiment, That is the moſt proper, and moſt diſtinguiſhing Experience. And have at ſuch a Time that Senſe of divine Things, that Apprehenſion of the Truth, Importance and Excellency of the Things of Religion, which then ſways and prevails, and governs his Heart and Hands; this is the moſt excellent ſpiritual Light, and theſe are the moſt diſtinguiſhing Diſcoveries. Religion conſiſts much in holy Affection; but thoſe Exerciſes of Affection which are moſt diſtinguiſhing of true Religion, are theſe practical Exerciſes. Friendſhip between earthly Friends conſiſts much in Affection; but yet thoſe ſtrong Exerciſes of Affection, that actually carry them through Fire and Water for each other, are the higheſt Evidences of true Friendſhip.

There

There is nothing in what has been ſaid, contrary to what is aſſerted by ſome ſound Divines; when they ſay, That there are no ſure Evidences of Grace, but the Acts of Grace. For that don't hinder but that theſe operative, productive Acts, thoſe Exerciſes of Grace that are effectual in Practice, may be the higheſt Evidences, above all other Kinds of Acts of Grace. Nor does it hinder but that, when there are many of theſe Acts and Exerciſes, following one another in a Courſe, under various Trials, of every Kind, the Evidence is ſtill heighten'd; as one Act confirms another. A Man by once ſeeing his Neighbour, may have good Evidence of his Preſence: But by ſeeing him from Day to Day, and converſing with him in a Courſe, in various Circumſtances, the Evidence is eſtabliſhed. The Diſciples, when they firſt ſaw Chriſt, after his Reſurrection, had good Evidence that he was alive: But by converſing with him for forty Days, and his *ſhewing himſelf to 'em alive, by many infallible Proofs*, they had yet higher Evidence. †

The Witneſs or Seal of the Spirit that we read of, doubtleſs conſiſts in the Effect of the Spirit of God in the Heart, in the Implantation and Exerciſes of Grace there, and ſo conſiſts in Experience. And it is alſo beyond Doubt, that this Seal of the Spirit, is the higheſt

† "The more theſe viſible Exerciſes of Grace are renewed, the "more certain you will be. The more frequently theſe Actings are "renewed, the more abiding and confirmed your Aſſurance will be. "A Man that has been aſſured of ſuch viſible Exerciſes of Grace, "may quickly after be in Doubt, whether he was not miſtaken. "But when ſuch Actions are renewed again and again, he grows "more ſettled and eſtabliſhed about his good Eſtate. If a Man ſee "a Thing once, that makes him ſure: But if afterwards he fear he "was deceived, when he comes to ſee it again, he is more ſure he "was not miſtaken. If a Man read ſuch Paſſages in a Book, he is "ſure it is ſo. Some Months after, ſome may bear him down, that "he was miſtaken, ſo as to make him queſtion it himſelf: But when "he looks, and reads it again, he is abundantly confirmed. The "more Men's Grace is multiplied, the more their Peace is multi-"plied; 2 Pet. i. 2. *Grace and Peace be multiplied unto you, through "the Knowledge of God and Jeſus our Lord.*" *Stoddard*'s Way to know Sincerity and Hypocriſy.

kind

Kind of Evidence of the Saints Adoption, that ever they obtain. But in these Exercises of Grace in Practice, that have been spoken of, God gives Witness, and sets to his Seal, in the most conspicuous eminent and evident Manner. It has been abundantly found to be true in Fact, by the Experience of the christian Church; that Christ commonly gives, by his Spirit, the greatest, and most joyful Evidences to his Saints, of their Sonship, in those effectual Exercises of Grace, under Trials, which have been spoken of; as is manifest in the full Assurance, and unspeakable Joys of many of the Martyrs. Agreeable to that, 1 Pet. iv. 14. *If ye are reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory, and of God resteth upon you.* And that in Rom. v. 2, 3. *We rejoice in hope of the Glory of God, and glory in Tribulations.* And agreeable to what the Apostle *Paul* often declares of what he experienc'd in his Trials. And when the Apostle *Peter*, in my Text, speaks of the *Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory*, which the Christians to whom he wrote, experienc'd; he has Respect to what they found under Persecution, as appears by the Context. Christ's thus manifesting himself, as the Friend and Saviour of his Saints, cleaving to him under Trials, seems to have been represented of old, by his coming and manifesting himself, to *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and *Abednego*, in the Furnace. And when the Apostle speaks of the Witness of the Spirit, in *Rom.* viii. 15, 16, 17; he has a more immediate Respect to what the Christians experienced, in their Exercises of Love to God, in suffering Persecution; as is plain by the Context. He is, in the foregoing Verses, encouraging the christian *Romans* under their Sufferings, that though their Bodies be dead, because of Sin, yet they should be raised to Life again. But it is more especially plain by the Verse immediately following, Ver. 18. *For I reckon that the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us.* So the Apostle has evidently Respect to their Persecutions, in all that he says

to

to the end of the Chapter. So when the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the *Earneſt of the Spirit*, which God had given to him, in 2 Cor. v. 5. the Context ſhews plainly that he has Reſpect to what was given him in his great Trials and Sufferings. And in that Promiſe of *the white Stone, and new Name to him that overcomes*, Rev. ii. 17; 'tis evident Chriſt has a ſpecial Reſpect to a Benefit that Chriſtians ſhould obtain, by overcoming, in the Trial they had, in that Day of Perſecution. This appears by Verſe 13, and many other Paſſages in this Epiſtle to the Seven Churches of *Aſia*.

Object. 2. Some alſo may be ready to object againſt what has been ſaid of chriſtian Practice being the chief Evidence of the Truth of Grace, that this is a *legal* Doctrine; and that this making Practice a Thing of ſuch great Importance in Religion, magnifies *Works*, and tends to lead Men to make too much of their *own Doings*, to the Diminution of the Glory of free Grace, and does not ſeem well to conſiſt with that great Goſpel Doctrine of *juſtification by Faith alone*.

But this Objection is altogether without Reaſon. Which Way is it inconſiſtent with the Freeneſs of God's Grace, that holy Practice ſhould be a Sign of God's Grace? 'Tis our Works being the *Price* of God's Favour, and not their being the *Sign* of it, that is the Thing which is inconſiſtent with the Freeneſs of that Favour. Surely the Beggar's looking on the Money he has in his Hands, as a *Sign* of the Kindneſs of him who gave it to him, is in no Reſpect, inconſiſtent with the Freeneſs of that Kindneſs. 'Tis his having Money in his Hands as the Price of a Benefit, that is the Thing which is inconſiſtent with the free Kindneſs of the Giver. The Notion of the Freeneſs of the Grace of God to Sinners, as that is revealed and taught in the Goſpel, is not that no holy and amiable Qualifications or Actions in us ſhall be a Fruit, and ſo a Sign of that Grace; but that is not the Worthineſs or Lovelineſs of any Qualification or Action of ours which recommends us to that Grace; that Kindneſs is ſhown to the Unworthy and Unlovely; that there is great Excellency in the Benefit beſtowed, and no Excellency in the Subject as the Price of it; that Goodneſs goes forth and flows out, from the Fulneſs of God's Nature, the Fulneſs of the Fountain of Good, without any Amiableneſs in the Object to draw it. And this is the Notion of Juſtification without Works (as this Doctrine is taught in the Scripture) that it is not the Worthineſs or Lovelineſs of our Works, or any Thing in us, which is in any wiſe accepted with God, as a *Balance* for the Guilt of Sin, or a Recommendation for Sinners to his Acceptance as Heirs of Life. Thus we are juſtified only by the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and not by our Righteouſneſs. And when Works are oppoſed to Faith in this Affair, and it is ſaid that we are juſtified by Faith and not by Works; thereby is meant, that it is not the Worthineſs or Amiableneſs of our Works, or any Thing in us, which recommends us to an Intereſt in Chriſt and his Benefits; but that we have this Intereſt only by Faith, or by our Souls receiving Chriſt, or adhering to, and cloſing with

with him. But that the Worthineſs or Amiableneſs of nothing in us recommends and brings us to an Intereſt in Chriſt, is no Argument that nothing in us is a Sign of an Intereſt in Chriſt.

If the Doctrines of free Grace, and Juſtification by Faith alone, be inconſiſtent with the Importance of holy Practice as a Sign of Grace; then they are equally inconſiſtent with the Importance of any Thing whatſoever in us as a Sign of Grace, any Holineſs, or any Grace that is in us, or any of our Experiences or Religion: for 'tis as contrary to the Doctrines of free Grace and Juſtification by Faith alone, that any of theſe ſhould be the Righteouſneſs which we are juſtified by, as that holy Practice ſhould be ſo. 'Tis with holy Works, as it is with holy Qualifications: 'Tis inconſiſtent with the Freeneſs of Goſpel Grace, that a Title to Salvation ſhould be given to Men for the Lovelineſs of any of their holy Qualifications, as much as that it ſhould be given for the Holineſs of their Works. It is inconſiſtent with the Goſpel Doctrine of free Grace, that an Intereſt in Chriſt and his Benefits ſhould be given for the Lovelineſs of a Man's true Holineſs, for the Amiableneſs of his renewed, ſanctified, heavenly Heart, his Love to God, and being like God, or his Experience of Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, Self-emptineſs, a Spirit to exalt Chriſt above all, and to give all Glory to him, and a Heart devoted unto him: I ſay, it is inconſiſtent with the Goſpel Doctrine of free Grace, that a Title to Chriſt's Benefits ſhould be given out of Regard to the Lovelineſs of any of theſe, or that any of theſe ſhould be our Righteouſneſs in the Affair of Juſtification. And yet this don't hinder the Importance of theſe Things as Evidences of an Intereſt in Chriſt. Juſt ſo it is with Reſpect to holy Actions and Works. To make light of Works, becauſe we ben't juſtified by Works, is the ſame Thing in Effect, as to make light of all Religion, all Grace and Holineſs, yea, true evangelical Holineſs, and all gracious Experience: For all is included, when the Scripture ſays, we are not juſtified by Works: For by Works in this Caſe, is meant all our own Righteouſneſs, Religion, or Holineſs, and every Thing that *is in us*, all the Good we do, and all the Good which we are conſcious of, all external Acts, and all internal Acts and Exerciſes of Grace, and all Experiences, and all thoſe holy and heavenly Things wherein the Life and Power, and the very Eſſence of Religion do conſiſt, all thoſe great Things which Chriſt and his Apoſtles mainly inſiſted on in their Preaching, and endeavoured to promote, as of the greateſt Conſequence in the Hearts and Lives of Men, and all good Diſpoſitions, Exerciſes and Qualifications of every Kind whatſoever; and even Faith itſelf, conſider'd as a Part of our Holineſs. For we are juſtified by none of theſe Things: And if we were, we ſhould, in a Scripture Senſe, be juſtified by Works. And therefore if it ben't legal, and contrary to the evangelical Doctrine of Juſtification without Works, to inſiſt on any of theſe, as of great Importance, as Evidences of an Intereſt in Chriſt; then no more is it thus to inſiſt on the Importance of Holy Practice. It would be legal to ſuppoſe that holy Practice juſtifies by bringing us to a Title to Chriſt's Benefits,

Benefits, as the Price of it, or as recommending to it by its Preciousness or Excellence; but it is not legal to suppose, that holy Practice justifies the sincerity of a Believer, as the proper Evidence of it. The Apostle *James* did not think it legal to say, that *Abraham our Father was justified by Works* in this Sense. The Spirit that indited the Scripture did not think the great Importance and absolute Necessity of holy Practice, in this Respect, to be inconsistent with the Freeness of Grace; for it commonly teaches 'em both together; as in Rev. xxi. 6, 7. God says, *I will give unto him that is Athirst, of the Fountain of the Water of Life freely:* And then adds, in the very next Words, *He that overcometh shall inherit all Things.* As tho' behaving well in the christian Race and Warfare, were the Condition of the Promise. So in the next Chapter, in the 14th, and 15th Verses, Christ says, *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life, and enter in thro' the Gates, into the City:* And then declares in the 15th Verse, *how they that are of a wicked Practice shall* be excluded; and yet in the two Verses next following, does with very great Solemnity, give forth an Invitation to all to come and take of the Water of Life freely; *I am the Root and the Off-spring of* David, *the bright and Morning-Star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is Athirst, Come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the Water of Life freely.* So Chap. iii. 20, 21. *Behold I stand at the Door and knock. If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me:* But then it is added in the next Words, *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my Throne.* And in that great Invitation of Christ, Matth. xi. latter End, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy Laden, and I will give you Rest;* Christ adds in the next Words, *Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of Heart, and ye shall find Rest unto your Souls: For my Yoke is easy, and my Burden is light:* As tho' taking the Burden of Christ's Service, and imitating his Example, were necessary in order to the promis'd Rest. So in that great Invitation to Sinners to accept of free Grace, Isai. lv, *Ho, every one that thirsteth! come ye to the Waters: And he that hath no Money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy Wine and Milk, without Money and without Price:* Even there, in the Continuation of the same Invitation, the Sinners forsaking his wicked Practice is spoken of as necessary to the obtaining Mercy: Verse 7, *Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon.* So the Riches of divine Grace, in the Justification of Sinners, is set forth, with the Necessity of holy Practice, Isai. i. 25, &c. *Wash ye, make you clean; put away the Evil of your Doings, from before mine Eyes: Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow: Come now, let us Reason together, saith the Lord, tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow; tho' they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.* And in

and

that moſt ſolemn Invitation of Wiſdom, *Prov.* ix, after it is repreſented what great Proviſion was made, and how that all Things were ready, the Houſe built, the Beaſts killed, the Wine mingled, and the Table furniſhed, and the Meſſengers ſent forth to invite the Gueſts; then we have the free Invitation, Ver. 4, 5, 6. *Whoſo is Simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth Underſtanding*, (i. e. has no Righteouſneſs) *ſhe ſaith to him, Come, eat of my Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled:* But then in the next Breath it follows, *Forſake the Fooliſh, and live, and go in the Way of Underſtanding:* As tho' forſaking Sin, and going in the Way of Holineſs, were neceſſary in order to Life. So that the Freeneſs of Grace, and the Neceſſity of holy Practice, which are thus from Time to Time join'd together in Scripture, are not inconſiſtent one with another. Nor does it at all diminiſh the Honour and Importance of Faith, that the Exerciſes and Effects of Faith in Practice, ſhould be eſteem'd the chief Signs of it; any more than it leſſens the Importance of Life, that Action and Motion are eſteemed the chief Signs of that.

So that in what has been ſaid of the Importance of holy Practice, as the main Sign of Sincerity; there is nothing legal, nothing derogatory to the Freedom and Sovereignty of the Goſpel Grace, nothing in the leaſt claſhing with the Goſpel Doctrine of Juſtification by Faith alone, without the Works of the Law, nothing in the leaſt tending to leſſen the Glory of the Mediator, and our Dependance on his Righteouſneſs, nothing infringing in the ſpecial Prerogatives of Faith in the Affair of our Salvation, nothing in any wiſe detracting from the Glory of God and his Mercy, or exalting Man, or diminiſhing his Dependance and Obligation. So that if any are againſt ſuch an Importance of holy Practice as has been ſpoken of, it muſt be only from a ſenſeleſs Averſion to the Letters and Sound of the Word *Works*; when there is no Reaſon in the World to be given for it, but what may be given with equal Force, why they ſhould have an Averſion to the Words Holineſs, Godlineſs, Grace, Religion, Experience, and even Faith itſelf: For to make a Righteouſneſs of any of theſe, is as legal, and as inconſiſtent with the Way of the new Covenant, as to make a Righteouſneſs of holy Practice. *

'Tis

* "You ſay you know Chriſt, and the Love and Good-will of Chriſt "towards you, and that he is the Propitiation for your Sins. How do "you know this; *He that ſaith I know him, and keepeth not his Command-"ments, is a Liar*, 1 John ii. 4. True, might ſome reply, he that keeps "not the Commands of Chriſt, hath thereby a ſure Evidence that he "knows him not, and that he is not united to him; but is this any Evidence "that we do know him, and that we are united to him, if we do keep his "Commandments; Yes verily, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Hereby we do know that "we know him, if we keep his Commandments.* And again, Ver. 5. *Hereby "know we that we are in him.* What can be more plain? What a Vanity "is it to ſay that this is running upon a Covenant of Works?——O Be-"loved, it is a ſad Thing to hear ſuch Queſtions, and ſuch cold Anſwers "alſo, that Sanctification poſſibly may be an Evidence. May be? Is it "not certain? Aſſuredly to deny it, is as bad as to affirm that God's own

"Promiſes

'Tis greatly to the Hurt of Religion, for Persons to make light of, and insist little on, those Things which the Scripture insist most upon, as of most Importance in the Evidence of our Interest in Christ; (under a Notion that to lay Weight on those Things is legal, and an old Covenant Way) and so to neglect the Exercises, and effectual Operations of Grace in Practice, and insist almost wholly on Discoveries, and the Method and Manner of the immanent Exercises of Conscience and Grace in Contemplation; depending on an Ability to make nice Distinctions in these Matters, and a Faculty of accurate Discerning in them, from Philosophy or Experience. It is in vain to seek for any better, or any further Signs, than those that the Scriptures have most expresly mention'd, and most frequently insisted on, as Signs of Godliness. They who pretend to a great Accuracy in giving Signs, or by their extraordinary Experience, or Insight into the Nature of Things, to give more distinguishing Marks, which shall more thoroughly search out, and detect the Hypocrite; are but subtil to darken their own Minds, and the Minds of others; their Refinings, and nice Discerning, are in God's Sight, but refined Foolishness, and sagacious Delusion. Here are applicable those Words of *Agur*, Prov. xxx. 5, 6. *Every Word of God is pure; he is a Shield to them that put their Trust in him: Add thou not unto his Words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a Liar.* Our Wisdom and Discerning, with Regard to the Hearts of Men, is not much to be trusted. We can see but a little Way into the Nature of the Soul, and the Depths of Man's Heart. The Ways are so many whereby Persons Affections may be moved without any supernatural Influence, the natural Springs of the Affections are so various and so secret, so many Things have oftentimes a joint Influence on the Affections, the Imagination, (and that in Ways innumerable and unsearchable) natural Temper, Education, the common Influences of the Spirit of God, a surprising Concourse of affecting Circumstances, an extraordinary Coincidence of Things in the Course of Men's Thoughts, together with the subtil Management of invisible malicious Spirits; that no Philosophy or Experience will ever be sufficient to guide us safely thro' this Labyrinth and Maze, without our closely following the Clew which God has given us in his Word. God knows his own Reasons why he insists on some Things, and plainly sets them forth as the Things that we should try ourselves by, rather than others. It may be it is because he knows that these Things are attended with less Perplexity, and that we are less liable to be deceived by them than others. He best knows our Nature; and he knows the Nature and Manner of his own Operations; and he best knows the Way of our Safety: he knows what Allowances to make for different States of his Church, and different Tempers of

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" Promises of Favour are not sure Evidences thereof, and consequently " that they are Lies and Untruths.——Our Saviour, who was no legal " Preacher, pronounceth, and consequently evidenceth Blessedness, by " eight or nine Promises, expresly made to such Persons, as had inherent " Graces, *Matth.* v. 3, 4, &c." *Shepard*'s Sound Believer, p. 221, 222, 223.

particular

particular Persons, and Varieties in the Manner of his own Operations, how far Nature may resemble Grace, and how far Nature may be mix'd with Grace, what Affections may arise from Imagination, and how far Imagination may be mix'd with spiritual Illumination. And therefore 'tis our Wisdom not to take his Work out of his Hands; but to follow him, and to lay the Stress of the Judgment of ourselves there, where he has directed us. If we do otherwise, no wonder if we are bewilder'd, confounded and fatally deluded; but if we had got into the Way of looking chiefly at those Things, which Christ and his Apostles and Prophets chiefly insisted on, and so in judging of ourselves and others, chiefly regarding practical Exercises and Effects of Grace, not neglecting other Things; it would be of manifold happy Consequence; it would above all Things tend to the Conviction of deluded Hypocrites, and to prevent the Delusion of those whose Hearts were never brought to a thorough Compliance with the strait and narrow Way which leads to Life; it would tend to deliver us from innumerable Perplexities, arising from the various inconsistent Schemes there are about Methods and Steps of Experience; it would greatly tend to prevent Professors neglecting Strictness of Life, and tend to promote their Engagedness and Earnestness in their christian Walk; and it would become fashionable for Men to shew their Christianity, more by an amiable distinguished Behaviour, than by an abundant and excessive declaring their Experiences; and we should get into the Way of appearing lively in Religion, more by being lively in the Service of God and our Generation, than by the Livelines and Forwardness of our Tongues, and making a Business of proclaiming on the House Tops, with our Mouths, the holy and eminent Acts and Exercises of our own Hearts; and Christians that are intimate Friends, would talk together of their Experiences and Comforts, in a Manner better becoming christian Humility and Modesty, and more to each others Profit; their Tongues not running before, but rather going behind their Hands and Feet, after the prudent Example of the blessed Apostle, 2 *Cor.* xii. 6; and many Occasions of spiritual Pride would be cut off; and so a great Door shut against the Devil; and a great many of the main stumbling Blocks against experimental and powerful Religion would be removed; and Religion would be declared and manifested in such a Way, that instead of hardening Spectators, and exceedingly promoting Infidelity and Atheism, would above all Things tend to convince Men that there is a Reality in Religion, and greatly awaken them, and win them, by convincing their Consciences of the Importance and Excellency of Religion. Thus the Light of Professors would so shine before Men, that others seeing their good Works, would glorify their Father which is in Heaven.

THE END.

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